

## **SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

#### **Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on May 21, 2008, 2008 at Normandy Manor, Centerport, New York.

#### **The following were in attendance:**

Dr. Steven Gittelman - President  
Michael B. DeLuise - Treasurer  
Dr. Anthony Pecorale - Trustee  
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones - Secretary  
Daniel Olivieri - Trustee  
Dr. William Rogers - Trustee  
Carol Ghiorso-Hart - Acting Executive Director  
John Pokorny - Staff  
Terry Pearsall - Legislative Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Ann Marie Pastore - Stenographer

#### **Absent:**

David D'Orazio - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Effie Gicas - Trustee  
William Macchione - Trustee  
Matthew Swinson - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

#### **Excused Absence:**

Susan LeBow - Trustee

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

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We'll begin the meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees Meeting. Please let the record reflect that we have Terry Pearsall from Presiding Officer Bill Lindsay's office here tonight. It is our custom to invite anyone who is here visiting us, if they would like to make any remarks.

**MR. PEARSALL:**

Bill just asked me to attend the Vanderbilt Board Meeting. Nothing more than that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Very good. Thank you and thank him for sending you, please. We have only eleven active members at this time, so six make a quorum. Therefore, we do have a quorum. Can I have a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting?

**DR. PECORALE:**

Motion.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any discussion? Tony?

**DR. PECORALE:**

For the record, it's noted that I was absent, but I was out of the country. I was in Portugal on vacation.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Is that an excused absence?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That's not an excused absence.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

We also have some excused absences for this evening.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

What excused absences?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Matt Swinson called. He's having car trouble and couldn't make it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Do you mean for tonight?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, we're still on the minutes to the last meeting. All in favor for approving the minutes? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 6/0/0/9 Absent: Mr. D'Orazio, Mr. Swinson, Ms. Gicas, Mr. Macchione & Ms. LeBow. Four vacant positions.)**

You were talking about excused absences for tonight?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Who did you hear from?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Matt Swinson had car trouble. He called and he's not able to make it. Effie Gicas' uncle passed away, and it was the only night for the wake. So she couldn't make it. Susan LeBow has neck trouble, so she couldn't make it. David D'Orazio had to stay at work and work late tonight.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The only one that's an excused absence is Susan LeBow. We know that Susan has a long-term medical problem. The others are not excused.

Education and Exhibits Committee, Gretchen.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Everyone should have a packet. Terry, maybe you would like a packet.

**MR. PEARALL:**

Sure.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Before we go further, what was Effie's relation to the person who died?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

It was her father's brother. She said she would give her maiden name and you can check it in the paper. She was very concerned. It was the only night of the wake. It wasn't a two day event, and she felt really bad.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's not an excused absence?

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

It sounds like it should be.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

An uncle?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'm not trying to make it not an excuse. The problem is that I believe that it has to be – let me check on that.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Does it have to be like the immediate death of the trustee?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

You get an excused absence if you die.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Most things in the statute, to my understanding, is that it has to be immediate family. Other than that, I'm not sure, but we can certainly leave that open and check the statute in terms of attendance. The other two – one was business related.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

One was business related, one was a transportation problem.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Neither one of them would be excused.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I was under the impression that there was something in there if you were going to be out of the country.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I don't believe so, but I could check.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Could I make a suggestion then? In the near future, that maybe we will talk about our responsibilities, clarify them, so that people know exactly what their responsibilities are. If there is a reason not to be here, and how many meetings after that -- so that it's clear as to how many we can miss.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That's easily done. It's in the code.

Education and Exhibits, Gretchen.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Before I start, I just want to say that I have put these packets together before, but I was just amazed at the diversity of this museum – the whale-shark, the cars, telescope, planetarium. It just reminded me what an awesome place this is. This is just one month's report. These are various things that were handed to me from Stephanie in the Education and Exhibits Committee. I will be referring to them as I go through the report. Some of them I think you will find pretty fascinating, especially the condition of our whale-shark and the progress that's being made. Too bad you can't see his new eyeball there, but I hear it's awesome.

As always, there is a lot going on in Education and Exhibits. In fact, this spring has proven to be very busy, with school bookings going to June 27, which is beyond any previous year. An extremely popular event is the "Our Night Out" program, which is so in demand that every show is sold out. Parents were thrilled with this new program and asked Lorraine for the titles and availability of the book she uses for the various programs. Plans are in progress to build on this phenomenon. The cycling program has expanded to four programs a month. The planetarium programs are going full speed. The spring and Passover break programs were very successful. They weren't record breakers like our February Fun Fest, but they were all very well attended. In fact, April may have set a record for the number of house tours. Something coming up that is always a

winner is our Living History Program. It will begin on the weekend of May 24 and continue through Labor Day. This year we will be continuing the recreation of 1938 at the Vanderbilt Mansion.

The Butterfly Education Program is one of our most popular spring programs. We're happy to announce that we now have a butterfly garden which entertains children as they eat their lunch near the guardhouse. It seems like the education building will soon be on-line. This could only enhance our programs. The Ed Building is a multifunctional space, which could be used for exhibits at certain times of the year.

As popular as our programs are, we're always looking for ways to expand and to engage more Long Island children. Plans are being developed to feature local history programs to be offered to our traditionally slow months, which are October and January.

Word has spread about the quality and depth of our summer programs. Beth reports that our Polynesian Program is practically fully booked, just on word of mouth from past experience. Flyers and ads have gone out to schools, *Newsday*, camp directories and the *Long Island Guide*, to inform of our programs and facilities. We have participated in the Huntington Tulip Festival and will be represented at Sweet Briar in June. Recently our planetarium and telescope have been featured in *Pulse* magazine and *Newsday*. I only have one *Pulse*, so I will just pass that around. The *Newsday* article is the first handout that you have in your packet.

Recently *Newsday* was doing a special on wedding gowns. The gorgeous wedding gowns were enhanced by the classic beauty of our grounds. Stephanie took the designers and photographers to places where they would not normally think of going, which resulted in uniquely beautiful shots.

One of the most exciting bits of news is that we are getting closer and closer to the complete restoration of the whale-shark. Thanks to images received over the internet of a live, swimming whale-shark at the Atlantis Aquarium, the restorers have produced anatomically correct eyes and have found features that were previously hidden. They've been here several times in recent months and are in the final stages of a remarkable restoration. It might be finished by the end of the summer, possibly even by the date of its capture, which was August 9. The dioramas will be completed later. In your packet, which is

the second page, are a couple of pictures of our whale-shark. You'll see that he is looking quite handsome.

Thanks to Stephanie, we have lots of handouts and news about upcoming events that she has been working on. The next article in your handout shows that Willie K. Vanderbilt, II, oldest surviving vehicle has been located. The 1904 40 horsepower Mercedes Simplex is on exhibit at the Mercedes Museum in Stuttgart.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's better than my stolen lions.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

That's right. You located them but we don't have them back yet.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

They're up in Rochester sitting there outside someone's house.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Well, we're slowly finding out where everybody is.

A paper was published by the Osaka Institute of Technology on a shrimp type specimen we loaned to them called *Coralliocaris tahitoei*. There's a copy of a letter from them in your packet. The original is in our archives now.

One of the amazing things about our marine collection is that it is pre-atomic radiation. We have a big potential for scientific research.

We have had several researchers in over the last couple of months. We have had a college student here to research historic gardens. We had an author from Florida doing research on the architect who designed Alva Base on Fisher Island. We have had author Bob King continuing research on Vanderbilt homes. We had an inquiry from "Papers of Abraham Lincoln" organization regarding a Lincoln letter dated May 1861 to the New York City Mayor Fernando Wood from Lincoln thanking him for this offer of help. And we also had here Howard Kroplick and Al Velocchi on the Vanderbilt Cup Races.

As you know, this year is the centennial anniversary of the 1908 Vanderbilt Cup Races. There was the first one won by an American, George Robertson. You have two articles that you have probably looked at already, and they appeared after

Howard Kroplick's book came out. There is a *New York Times* article from March 16 and a *Roslyn News* article from March 13. Both articles are on the races, Vanderbilt's love of cars, racing and local history.

New additions have been made to our permanent collection that remain unaccessioned until proper provenance is established. It's very significant to get new items added to a closed collection such as ours. You have a picture of one of them, and it's a copy of "LaVie au Grand Air" from 1902 and bound editions of Parsian magazine picturing Willie K. Vanderbilt, II, on the cover. The second is the original Samuel Yellin blueprint of ironwork details on the Eagles Nest balcony.

Finally, a large Christmas tree and decorations were donated to the mansion. Several Vanderbilt books were donated by Al Velocchi. Also pollution light filters and editing and recording equipment for the planetarium were donated by ASLI (Astronomical Society of Long Island.)

That's the end of the Education and Exhibits Report.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments or questions? I didn't see this article, but do you know if she supported the species?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I have not seen the article.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

They sent a copy of the letter, which started quite a while ago, a copy of it to us and one to the Museum of Natural History.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, because it's currently in the AMNH.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

I don't know the background.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I was just curious to see if she supported the – because it was named by Boone, who was the marine biologist who wrote Willie's bulletins for the Vanderbilt Marine Museum. She does not seem to have synonymized the species, so it looks like the species survived, which is rare. That would make one of three

that we know that has survived such scrutiny. That's pretty cool.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Steve, did we ever get anything from the people who took some of our species – some of our material to check on the fact that these were species that were before the atomic bomb was dropped in the Pacific Ocean, and they wanted to check the DNA to see if there had been any change.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I haven't seen a paper come out on that, no.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I remember the Atomic Energy Commission took some of our material.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

But I haven't seen a paper come out.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Is there any chance you could possibly write to them and ask them if there has been any possible information out there?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Sure.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Certainly at the time I thought it was supposed to be a big deal, that they wanted to check and see if, in fact, there had been explosions on the testing islands to see if there had been any DNA changes. That was the reason they took them, I believe.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

But we'll have to contact them to see if we can get ahold of the original scientists to see if anything came of their research, if it was published in a public journal.

**DR. PECORALE:**

So you haven't heard anything on that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, nothing came in on that, at least not to my knowledge. Thank you for that report. Any comments or questions? Development Committee, David D'Orazio.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

He is not here tonight. I do have a meeting set up with him for Tuesday, I believe, at 6:30 to discuss the upcoming gala and some other issues. I'll send a notice out to all the Trustees and any Trustee is welcome to attend that meeting to discuss any upcoming fundraising events.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

David has been running that gala three or four years now, right?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Yes. We are changing it up a little bit this year for the centennial of the Motor Parkway. We're doing a lot with cars this year. It's going to be a big month for us, and the gala is going to be the kick-off for our actual events.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Finance Committee, Michael.

**MR. DELUISE:**

The financial statements are in your packet. We continue to watch expenses. Membership is building. You will notice on the statements we still have some challenging situations. I do still think we have to strengthen our fundraising and sponsorships. I hope that the weather is remaining as good. A little wind and rain can really affect people at the box office.

The other thing I had suggested, and Carol and I have been meeting frequently on this, mostly to just go over paying of bills and checking things out, but one of the things that I had suggested was that Carol look into a corporate credit card. I would like the Board to give her support if she can find that. I do think that a corporate card, something like American Express, would make statements much easier. It would be easier to monitor and make payments that much better. It will save a lot of last minute running around when you need some emergencies done. Carol, are you looking into that?

The other thing is if you could just explain a little bit on how we are going with admissions and some of the little challenges that we have that affect the finances.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Sure. As you can see, and I did include for you, some of our comparisons going back to two years, so we can see where we are in comparison to then, so we can get a handle on what's

going on. We're doing pretty good. We have revised our operating budget to be as realistic as possible. We're actually doing much better than our projections had led us to believe we would be at this point. In large part it's because the weather worked with us in January, February and March. We didn't have any significant snow. We didn't have to pay for snow removal or sand on ice. We didn't have to cancel very many things at all. As we discussed previously, February break, because of the lunar eclipse and other things, was spectacular. We really are doing pretty well. We're noticing in May weekend traffic is very slow. We're looking and trying to analyze why that is. May is traditionally a slow month for visitors but our school programs are very busy during that month. We're balancing out there.

Talking to other museums, they are all having problems on lower attendance admissions. We are looking closely at how we plan to increase our admissions from the general public to more advertising and developing a marketing plan. We are certainly looking toward this year and particularly next year. We will probably talk about that in a little bit. I don't know if there are any particular questions, but we don't feel there is anything out of the ordinary so far.

A big expense, which I will talk more about, is our event tent floor. I had budgeted in to purchase a floor for our event tent. That was already budgeted in. By the time we're through with it, we're not done yet, but it's going to be probably on the order of \$50,000 more than I originally anticipated, but we should be okay because our revenue is higher than we anticipated, as well.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Carol, I'm looking at this now. You did an outstanding job since you've come on, getting this thing balanced, surpluses. It's been outstanding compared to all those other years. You really did a great job with the budgets and the numbers. They are just outstanding compared with what we have been dealing with.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

I'll second that.

**MR. DELUISE:**

I'll third it. Do you want to talk about the corporate credit card, because I do think that would for accounting purposes – what happens is – a number of times because our funds are limited, Carol has had to go and use her own credit card. In the past, Lance has had to use his own credit card for certain things done

at the last minute. At the end of the month, if you have a card, whether it's American Express or whatever else it is, everything is listed. It's very easy to –

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Right now what happens is we order things on-line and making reservations for conferences, hotels, and things like that. Again, it's mostly for things on-line. I usually will use my own card or other staff uses their own cards, and then they get reimbursed. It might come in at some other times, not so much for the finances, but if it's over \$250, I need a second signature. If I have to pay a caterer or whatever over that amount, and they need the money immediately, then we have to charge it that way.

**MR. DELUISE:**

You'll find things like office supplies, if you're ordering office supplies and you need them immediately, you can now order overnight or go into someplace and order it without waiting to be billed. In the long run, in my opinion, it seems to be something that just helps everything run smoothly.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Mike, my opinion has always been that I really abhor having the employees or Executive Director pulling out their own personal cards to fund any activity in the museum, but I'm also very cautious about having a corporate card, only because – and it's nothing about any individual sitting here, I'm just saying that that's the recipe sometimes for problems. It's been in the newspapers. It's been everywhere. We have to talk about this and analyze it more as far as what the limits are, what the rules are, and how it's going to be looked at. We certainly don't want to have any criticism coming this way about innocent behavior.

**MR. DELUISE:**

I agree, and if you look at the way they do it for corporate credit cards, there is a monthly limit. Everything is completely itemized. We could set the rules before we start, but I at least think it's worth looking into.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I definitely think you should look into this, but being one of the very few corporate capitalist sitting in this room right now, I just know that corporate credit cards lead to trouble sometimes, especially American Express, as you mentioned, they don't have limits.

**MR. DELUISE:**

No, the corporate credit card is different.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

No, I got those. There are limits, yes, but what are those? \$50,000?

**MR. DELUISE:**

Dan, no. I'm telling you, trust me because I've been very close to this. I was involved years ago when they were doing this. You can put a \$5,000 or \$4,000 limit on it. It will stop immediately if it's a penny more than that.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I'm just saying we need to set parameters.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Absolutely.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We really have to analyze this. It's not anything about anyone sitting here. We just have to be careful with this because God forbid people do things innocently, and they do it – four or five different people, and they start spending, and then the next thing you know, you're looking at a \$30,000 or \$40,000 bill that's not budgeted for out of pure innocence.

**MR. DELUISE:**

But if the rules are that one person has a credit card and at the end of the month it's itemized, I just think it's really worth looking at. For me, from somebody who – I'm not an expert in what I'm doing, so this makes it much easier to look at one sheet of paper where everything is itemized. I think I would be much more comfortable with that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

For the record, first of all, no employee here has charged anything with permission. We have never – and I'll be very honest with you, one of the few times that Carol and I had what I consider an important dispute was when she did charge something on her card. As far as I'm concerned, we really can't allow or shouldn't allow anyone and the Director should make sure that no one, including the Director, does that. When Lance did it, it was under protest, too. First of all, he didn't inform me and we found out about it later, and it has been a problem in the past. We have a choice that either you're allowed to pay by a

corporate card or you don't allow it at all. But you can't allow employees to use their own cards.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I agree with that.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

If I charge, I figure I'm taking that risk on myself. I realize it still has to be approved.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's not your place, Carol. You really shouldn't be doing that.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

But, for example -- I'll give you a perfect example. When we put in the ad for the new Executive Director through AAM, the only payment they would accept was a credit card. They would not accept a check to be mailed to them. They would only accept a credit card. I asked the committee at that time if any Trustee wanted to do it. No one really wanted to do it, so I put it on my personal credit card. Again, if I put it on a credit card, I'm willing to take the risk that when someone saw the reimbursement, they might say, "Sorry, you shouldn't have charged that."

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

But you can't. It leads to other potential problems for everybody.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

You can't. First of all, it's not a question of what the judgment is or whether it was appropriate in your mind. You can't do it. We don't want to be put in a position of somebody else standing to loose -- it's as if we're giving check signing privileges to a third party, who we haven't designated the right to do so. If someone spends something on behalf of the museum through their credit card, they can make the claim that they were doing it with approval. Even though you say you wouldn't make such a claim, we can't allow that kind of spending to exist without approval. That's why I had a real problem when you did it. You did it for a lot of money, and I was very upset. I think we do have a problem. We do have to come up with a policy on this.

Tony, did you want to contribute to this?

**DR. PECORALE:**

The main thing I wanted to say is for years I have had credit cards by the school district.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Are you sure you want to go with school districts right now?

**DR. PECORALE:**

I understand that, but I'm telling you that I had credit cards from the school district, and there are certainly conditions upon how that credit card could be used. The conditions made it nearly impossible for my particular situation to be able to steal money from the school district. The problem is when you don't have those kinds of limits put on that. It's got to be that the person in charge of it has to notify a separate individual and there has to be limits.

**MR. DELUISE:**

With all this oversight and whether it's American Express or Master Card or any of those corporate cards, the companies will work with you. It is virtually impossible to do anything wrong without someone knowing about it.

**DR. PECORALE:**

But the key is that when that bill comes in, it has to be seen by not just the person who has the card and not just the person who is under control of the person who has the card. There has to be separate and distinct limits. I will tell you, it sounds very strange, but I have the ability to charge up to \$1,000, but every single time I made a charge of anything involving the school district, that had to be reported to two separate individuals. It had to be reported to the President of the Board of Education and it had to also be reported to the auditor of the school district.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think that one of the things we can do, and we understand your suggestion, but what we need is a prototype. Perhaps we could look at the school districts or perhaps we could look to the County to find out if they issue credit cards to anybody and what County policy is. Terry is saying no. Okay, the County does not issue credit cards to anybody. So there is a prototype for you.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's always been my knee-jerk reaction. If you come up with a plan for us, I would be more than willing to listen to it, but my knee-jerk reaction is –

**MR. DELUISE:**

You're dealing with a different kind of corporate credit card. The corporate credit cards that you work with now, we can eliminate certain categories that we can't charge for. You can be very specific for the kind of companies you can charge for, but in order to do business here, and I see the way Carol has to run around to get things done, it would make sense to at least look into this.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We're not saying we won't look into this.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We're just concerned. We need to understand more right now. For what I do for a living, I know that stuff is a recipe for trouble because sometimes somebody just runs a card for something totally legitimate, and they take that number and the next thing you know you've got all kinds of fraud. It has nothing to do with any employee or any person within –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Let me just add to this. My key concern is not one of fraud. My key concern is well intentioned spending that may for some reason run astray of perhaps what the institution's direction might have been. We have had this happen, okay? I, frankly, just don't want to be put in a position of having to reimburse something that didn't have prior approval. That's what I'm worried about. Of course, it's a concern that somebody might steal, but I'm more concerned that somebody might spend and then find us cornered to cover the spending when we didn't agree with that expenditure.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

You lay out another layer of administrative effort because it's not just you, as Treasurer, and it's not just Carol, as Acting Executive Director. Now you have to find that third or fourth person to review those bills, like the accountant, the bookkeeper, or whatever.

**MR. DELUISE:**

But they should be doing that anyway.

**DR. ROGERS:**

Of one individual, that means that that would be the one who authorizes use and makes it more convenient for whatever purpose it's going to be used, and that individual has to be responsible for it.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We're an institution. It's not just one individual that's responsible. We're all responsible.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think almost conversely, I'd like to consider a motion on the table. I'm not trying to shut down conversation but I would like to have a motion that we prohibit anybody spending money on a credit card.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

With a separate discussion which is quite the reverse of what Michael is asking for.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

From your own private credit card.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

With their own private credit card with the intent of requesting reimbursement, because we have had to deal with this in the past, and it is a problem.

**DR. PECORALE:**

That also has another part to it. That other part is that there may be a necessity for that person to use their own credit card for something that has to be done and payment has to accompany that purchase. I can think of three or four things that have come up in the past where if it hadn't been that some employee was allowing use of their credit card, we might have had a serious problem.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Well, then if that's the case, for one I would say that then they didn't plan well.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Tony is talking about emergency situations.

**DR. ROGERS:**

That sometimes you cannot do anything without a credit card. I understand that, but my position is we've got to really look at what my suggestion is and get a real plan and procedure together before we jump on this.

**DR. PECORALE:**

And that's what I'm willing to make a motion on. I'd like to make a motion that it be looked into and that a report come back as to the feasibility and the manner in which we can be careful with the controls.

**MR. DELUISE:**

I'll second that.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I want to know what the procedure and the process is going to be.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Absolutely.

**DR. PECORALE:**

That should be part of the report back to us.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I hear what the President is saying right now, but sometimes right now without a stop-gap measure, when there is an emergency and you need a credit card and the Executive pulls it out, I don't like it, I continually said, no, that's not the way to do it, but I don't want to limit it and put a stop on it at this very moment without something in place that will take care of an emergency.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

This falls under the Finance Committee. I'm just going to suggest that it goes back to the Finance Committee, and we will get a report on that.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Did we get a motion to look into this?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I'll make a motion.

**DR. GITTELMAN :**

Tony already made the motion.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I'll second it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 6/0/0/9 Absent: Mr. D'Orazio, Mr. Swinson, Ms. Gicas, Mr. Macchione & Ms. LeBow. Four vacant positions.)**

Audit Committee, Dan.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we are still waiting for the legal opinion from the County Attorney's Office so we can finalize our audit for 2006. The reason being is we need to have a clarification with regard to certain line items to be either kept or removed, and our auditors would not give us an opinion that we considered proper unless they had that legal opinion. It's just a matter of time. We have spoken with the County Attorney's Office. They have got it. I believe they have everything they need. They are just working on, and we're just waiting for them, unfortunately.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Does anybody need clarification on what the issues are?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We got through all the other stuff very quickly with the audits. This is the last one. It's a little bit behind. As soon as we finish this one, we'll jump on 2007.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any other questions?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Just one more thing. Once we get the legal opinion, 2007 should be able to shoot right out of the accountants real quick, too.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

This is a relatively long-term debate that we just couldn't finish up. Maybe just because we have a guest, it might be worth explaining what the issue is.

**MR. PEARSALL:**

Maybe we can help.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It's very simple. When we have been doing the audits what we have been doing is we have been running into an issue because there was a change in the law from the Federal government in how things are classified. When it finally came down to the analysis, we realized that the endowment and the real property in assets of the property of the museum strictly belongs to the County. The County has been carrying these two items on their books forever. We also have been carrying those same two items on our books at the museum as an operating entity and that created a bit of a conflict. If you ask the County auditors, they say that this is all our property, all our headaches. Yet our auditors are saying that unless we get this legal opinion, we don't want to remove those two specific items from our audit report as property of the museum's operating entity. It's just something that was created. There was a change in the law.

**MR. PEARSALL:**

Have you been corresponding with the County?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Absolutely.

**MR. PEARSALL:**

Maybe you could forward a copy to the Presiding Officer's Office?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Sure.

**DR. PECORALE:**

It has to do with the GASBE.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

There is a change from FASBE to GASBE.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Which I still don't understand.

**MR. PEARSALL:**

I'm not sure if the County Attorney –

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

What is her name again?

**MR. PEARSALL:**

Christine Malafi.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

There is a pile of papers on her desk regarding this. It just takes time.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Carol.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

The last month we have been focusing very much on our event tent. We did purchase a floor for the tent this year. We were advised by DPW that we would not be allowed to construct a wooden platform as had been in previous years. Fortunately, we did have the revenue available to purchase this system, which is a modular system. We were told that it will go up in just a few days and come down as quickly, and that we would then own that and move it if the need should arise, and that the tent could sit on top of it.

Getting the necessary building permits and working with the County has just been – my first go around, it took a lot of work. I have to say that the people at DPW have been just wonderful working and helping in making sure that our platform and tent is as safe as they can possibly be, and that it's up to building codes. Because it's a very unusual use, I guess, it's a new project for everybody.

As of today, we did have the tent and the floor up. We have a few more changes to make for the long-term use of that, which we are in the process of doing. The staff over the last week has worked many hours. We were here from six in the morning until eleven at night straight through in the mud and the rain working to make sure that we would be able to have our first wedding of the year, which was this past Saturday, which went very well.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

If this bride knew how much effort was put in place in order to make it possible for her go down the aisle and have her party there, she would be very impressed. She shouldn't even know because it was very successful.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That means it was a very successful wedding. The bride didn't know.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

It was a very successful wedding, and again I have to thank everyone from DPW for really working with us. We are developing a good relationship with them. We're trying to do the same thing for the good of the public, and it's been really wonderful working with all these people.

We have some more work to do. There are little things that could make our temporary tent structure even better. We are going to be doing everything within the next few weeks before the next big event to make sure that we go above and beyond anything that they expected. It was a wonderful event. We do have a few issues with our neighbors that we are working out, but I don't anticipate any real problems.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

The music got loud, huh?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Tonight there is a site use of the planetarium, a corporate event down in the planetarium. They are going to see the Beatles Laser Show.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Are they using the telescope?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I think they are going to just see the laser show. Again, everyone from every department from the planetarium staff to curatorial, we were all down there in the mud making sure that we had what we needed to do. The staff is small, but we are helping each other out. It's very nice to see a curator working with the grounds crew or planetarium staff helping out moving tables. We're talking physical labor, as well, doing the running around that freed up the guys who could haul a little better and potting plants. We did all we had to do and stayed into the night

to do it. That's the kind of team we have. It's wonderful to see. It was a major accomplishment for us. As I said, we still have a little bit more work to do, but I'm sure we will get the help that we have been receiving.

We haven't had to worry too much about not being able to pay the unexpected addition of bills for certificates. We have had some things come up unexpectedly. While we have been doing weddings now for a few years, this isn't the first time. At the beginning laws changed, things changed. We just want to make sure we always have the best possible safety measures for the safety of our guests. We will be using this tent not just for weddings but as an event tent for a special event, for concerts, for education programs. It opens up a 50 by 80 foot place to have weekday programs. We're going to be trying to exploit that use a little bit more now that we know we have a very solid place to venue. We're looking at it from that point of view, as well, not just as a wedding place, but as a place for additional programs.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

More?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Again, our grounds crew as well as restoration staff have been working very hard. If you go around the property, you will see a lot of changes in the pool; some of our fountains have been restored, repainted. A lot of planting has been done. We have worked very hard with our master gardeners who volunteer. The master gardeners are just delighted to be working with the staff that we have now. We put in a new butterfly garden. We have been cutting and mowing. Things look really, really beautiful. The staff is noticing. Our visitors are noticing. It's a very nice climate to be in right now. People are starting to take a lot of pride. When they see how much can be accomplished by two men and a mower it's just amazing. For the first time in at least a few years you can now see the swimming pool from the mansion.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Two men and a mower – is that a movie?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

We're really sort of focusing our energy back on maintenance as well. Sometimes the work can be just overwhelming and you feel what's the point, but I think people are getting out there and

saying it's sort of fun to be proud of what just one or two people can do. I'm very proud of all the staff.

We have a lot going on with our capital projects. As you know, we have a lot of ongoing capital project work. We expect our education center to open shortly. The capital project is complete. We are now at the point where we just need the fire marshal to come in and give the okay. When that happens, we'll be able to open our education building, which is really a central location between the marine museum and the mansion. It's a wonderful venue for our –

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

We should all take a field trip down there.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

We should. There, too, we had some help from some of the County work crews painting and our crew went in there, and it's all been repainted, both floors, and it's looking really nice. It's sort of this color, I guess. That has had a major overhaul. That's looking really good.

The boathouse project has been temporarily stopped. DPW is reevaluating where they are in their funding for that project. That's why right now the work has stopped, as they see how far their funding is going to take them and they are reevaluating that. I expect to see the letter from them in the next few weeks outlining that a little bit more.

We have many more capital projects that are at various stages of work. Hopefully, mid-summer some work will continue. Many of these projects are in various bidding stages and we will see hopefully by the end of the summer some continued work.

At this point, again, as we all know, there are many, many projects that we would love to see happen on the property. We are very careful. We understand the budgetary constraints of the County. We only ask for help on things that are necessary. Even if we eliminate on what we would like to see happen, what we need from restoration conservation, we have focused our energies on the essential projects. That has been our capital program that was put forward in the last few years.

In January we did submit – we didn't add any new programs, but we did further some of our ongoing capital programs. When we got the County Executive's budget back for the capital program,

with the exception of our façade program, he had eliminated the funding for the other capital projects. This was not usual for the other entities. We weren't the only ones, in other words.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It's very unusual. It's precedent setting. We have never had that happen before. However, we probably weren't alone in suffering the pain. It's not as if we were purely singled out. However, as an institution that has great needs, having company -- the misery doesn't necessarily fix this. The only project that was retained was the repair of buildings and facades. If you go and look, for example, at the back of this brochure, it's very tastefully done, but the building that is the focal point of the museum, the tower, is covered by netting. That netting, that black netting, is because the stucco is falling off the building. Of course, to have somebody from the public walk under the stucco and to have a piece of stucco hit them would be a tragedy. There is also a tragedy from a historic --

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

That piece of façade sitting right over there fell off the building.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Well, what I would like you to understand is that Willie K. made a particularly poor choice when he built this house because he stuccoed it. It's just that it lasted throughout his life. He just wasn't planning for our lives. So we have stucco that is in some cases 80 or 90 years old. It's fragile and when water gets behind it and if you look at the tower -- it's not as if we have an occupied building, per se, even though there is a room in it, there really is no way for us to stop the water from infiltrating. There have been a lot of stop gap measures over the years, but what happens is the water gets in there, it goes through an expansion and contraction process, and it pushes the stucco off the building. We then end up with not only a safety hazard but we end up with the destruction of a true Long Island landmark.

You will also notice that in this picture there is no, for example, weather vane on top. We have perhaps one of the most gorgeous weather vanes in weather vane history. It remains in storage. What we have here is an incomplete icon. It is slowly decaying.

The County Executive did retain this particular project. However, there were a number of projects that had funding that was eliminated. Budget Review for the Legislature had a

number of extensive meetings with us in the form of, shall we say, information gathering. I can tell you from memory the changes that they made. They did not support the project to restore the Habitat Wing. Now I need to narrow you down to what was part of this project. The Stall Wing was a later addition. One of the projects that we need that had been put in was the actual removal of the Stall Wing. We turned to the original architecture. One of the other components of this particular project was that where the Stall Wing abuts against the building, there is an interface that leaks. We have the combination of if you're going to retain the Stall Wing, we're going to have leaks. The leaks detract heavily from another section of the building, the habitat, which is in the process of approaching completion in terms of restoration. It has a temporary ceiling on it. It's not really finished, but let's put it this way, we now have leaks that front it. The entrance to the habitat is severely diminished by the problems that exist at the Stall Wing that was added in 1972. Stall was a Trustee, and he had this collection, and it certainly must have its place, but it shouldn't distract/detract from the architecture of this historically important building.

That was a project that the County Executive chose to eliminate. He did leave \$200,000 in planning money that had been set aside in order to facilitate this project. One of the problems that I suggested and both Carol, and I recognized with the \$200,000, is that now we have \$200,000 that has been converted to construction money, but we have no planning money for the \$200,000. Really nothing moves forward with DPW unless there is appropriate planning money to facilitate construction.

What we suggested in yesterday's hearing was that – we're grateful for the \$200,000. We're glad that's been retained. We understand that the balance on the Stall Wing project has been removed from the budget. But what we need now is that the \$200,000 have appropriate planning money as part of the deal so that we can move forward to fix the leaks. We have to fix the leaks. If we're going to keep the building, we have to stabilize it.

The philosophy of Budget Review in approaching our projects has been toward stabilization. It's not really toward development. It hasn't been toward improvement. I'm speaking proactively forward. So what they did was they said to keep the \$200,000 and fix the leaks. We need that \$200,000 to be restructured so that we can have \$20,000 of planning money

and what might be \$180,000 in construction money. It is now all in construction money.

The County Executive then took out all other projects. I want to go through all projects with you because I think you do need an update. I know that it's something that Trustees always are wondering – what's happening with the capital construction and with the future.

One of the projects that was eliminated for the future, and the County Executive really put down the law in terms of saying this project is deleted, was the last segment of the boardwalk that accesses the waterfront. Now from the flow of people going – this is the segment that we connected the seaplane hangar and the boardwalk to the planetarium, so if you think of going down to the boathouse, going across the boardwalk, accessing across the waterfront, going to the seaplane hangar, returning, and going up to the planetarium so that you have a flow of traffic that goes in a loop, they have eliminated the last leg.

Their philosophy seems to be that they want us to submit an application for appropriate funding at the time that the other projects have been advanced to the point where the funding seems to be imminently needed. My experience is that when funding is imminently needed, it's too late. It's very late. For example, if we need funding to fix the bridge – and this is a separate subject here – we're too late to put in for funding to repair for the bridge because it caught us by surprise. So now you have to go through an appropriation process. You have to find a sponsor, and it's a slow process. That's the way it is. We have to live within those bounds, but we do not feel that eliminating these funds in future years is the appropriate move because we are going to need, if the County is moving forward with the waterfront, we're going to need these funds. Otherwise, people who go down to the waterfront, go down to the seaplane hangar and then have to walk back through the whole waterfront – one of the things that I learned in terms of entertaining people is, don't make them do it twice.

When you go through the American Museum of Natural History and you walk through the dinosaur hall, you go through a different path and come out a different way. So the idea is not to make people repeat it. The other thing is you want a shorter egress for people who want to get out. So that project was eliminated and it was eliminated with great strength of language.

Improvements to Normandy Manor -- we're sitting in Normandy Manor. We are very grateful for Budget Review's analysis of Normandy Manor. The intent of Normandy Manor originally was that this was supposed to be a place where the public could gather. This was supposed to be a place of public access. The building has two fundamental problems. One is that it needs severe maintenance on the roof and other things. The other is to make it set for public occupancy. We need a ramp, and we need handicapped bathrooms. The funding was recommended by Budget Review to leave in only the repair component, to maintain the status quo, but not to add the incremental money to give us the bathrooms and the ramp. In other words, to get this to be legally occupied, as we are right now in a public occupancy type mode, we need a ramp and handicapped access. The idea here is that this building would be a starting point for people to come in and be oriented. Then across the road would be a place where they go to see. That was one of the intents of purchasing it. We appreciate their supporting us with the \$450,000, but we do need the original \$600,000.

The County Executive eliminated future money for restoration of driveways and gutters. Budget Review has recommended that that be reinstated. The County Executive recommended a removal of future money in 2009 going forward of environmental control systems. Budget Review recommended that they remain stable. The County Executive recommended removal of the rewiring of historic structures. Budget Review recommends that it be reinstated. Rehabilitation of the plumbing was removed by the County Executive and Budget Review recommended that that be reinstated.

The Budget Review Office did an extensive, detailed review. We agree with almost all of their recommendations, with the exceptions of the ones that I mentioned here. Any questions?

**DR. ROGERS:**

Does that put the kibosh on the hangar?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The hangar has a different problem. The problem that we're speaking of here addresses only funds that were previously budgeted, not appropriated, but budgeted for the future -- this is what we anticipate needing. These are the projects. We're in phase one of the project, phase two is in the future. For example, rewiring, plumbing, roadwork.

I remember very clearly. I have been here a long time. One of the first capital projects that we did here was the re-pointing of the Belgium block. There was a time when you could walk up and take a Belgium block and take it home for a souvenir. In fact, if you didn't take it home, you had a good chance of breaking your ankle on it.

What is happening is that after a decade or so and after one of the early capital projects that was part of the grand plan, the Belgium blocks, as other things, they need constant maintenance. How many of you have driveways that need to be re-asphalted or, if you're lucky enough to have Belgium block, re-pointed. This is something that needs to be done periodically. Therefore, even when you talk about the stucco on the building, I don't like being the bearer of bad news, but anybody who works on this Board has to know that we will always need money for repairing the buildings for various capital projects. This is the responsibility that exists and there will be sections of the stucco that constantly needs to be repaired and rebuilt. You will periodically have to redo the Belgium blocks.

It just so happens that I happen to be in a position to have worked to get the money for the original Belgium blocks, I feel like it's a *deja vu*. I'm back again fighting for the driveway. Not everything goes as planned. We did not expect the bridge to start to decay. We didn't catch it. It's true. We did not anticipate – nobody said, "The bridge is beginning to decay. Let's put in a capital project for bridge repair." We are hoping that the money that was in the budget for repair of driveways and gutters could be applied to repair the bridge, but it's gone.

**DR. PECORALE:**

We had a Director that solved the problem of the Belgium blocks. You could just blacktop over them.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I understand that.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I don't think that's what you want.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I understand that we have heard all kinds of proposals, but the Belgium blocks – these Belgium blocks were removed from New York City. They were brought here. They are as much a part of the fabric of this place as the eagles are at the entrance.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Or the lions.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Yes, or the lions.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We can only repair what we have. We can't fix what is gone. Once it's gone, it's gone. That's the same case with the boathouse. One of the problems we have, and this is not pointing fingers, but when we put in a project, for example, like this last phase of the boardwalk, we put them in at a cost that was frankly I believe five years or six years ago the appropriate amount. What contractor that you know who will hold the budget for six years? The repair of the seaplane hangar is, I believe, a ten year old concept, a ten year old project. But the budget was put together almost a decade ago. Whatever money we have in here is reduced simply by half or more. Now to have a project eliminated, it just puts us in a position where we have no wiggle room.

We're very fortunate that Budget Review works hard, and that they put together a report. We do not know what their report would say, but I can tell you they were very diligent. We're also very fortunate to have DPW be the kind of partners that we have always needed DPW to be. There is no question about that. We have never had regular meetings with DPW on alternating projects, whatever they may be. They are our allies. They are coming here, and they are trying to make sense out of projects, but all the same, projects that were scheduled to be finished three and four years ago aren't even started. If you look at the amount of money that's been spent out of let's say the reconstruction of the seaplane hangar, we might have spent 5 or 10 percent of the funds that were originally designed.

We had two problems. One is that the County Executive has simply left us out of the budget and left us with one critical project. The second is that we can't get the money spent. We can do the first to some extent by presenting our arguments. The second one is much tougher to deal with because it's very hard to control who spends what.

Okay, I'm going to call the President's Report, unless anybody has any questions. Is there any old business? I will bring up some old business, if I might. Dan, did you want to say something?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Cornell.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That was my old business.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We had a lively debate here last time on Cornell. Unfortunately, things have not improved much. We were trying to get a meeting with them, and unfortunately they cannot figure out how to get a time down with my schedule, which was very liberal, very open. I was very disappointed with the responses from Cornell. New things have occurred. In part, the bridge issues have now limited them. They are now, in my opinion, in a state of disarray because they don't know if they can do their summer camp. I don't know if they're going to have access to where their experiments are being conducted. It's just one unmitigated mess down there right now.

We're at a point where I am not sure what we can do. We just may have to draw a line in the sand with them and say, "Listen, either do what's right here or leave." I just don't know what to do. We have been talking about them, and they have other issues going on now where they may not be able to stay anyway because of access issues and other stuff that's going on with their own building. There are certain safety issues that have now risen. They are not meeting their obligations. Unfortunately, at this point, despite what this board said to me at the last meeting, that I was going to give them specific directions, but we have gone nowhere.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Well, nowhere is a place.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It's not good because we had hoped that they would be able to meet certain financial obligations that would benefit us. It looks like they're not going to be able to do it, and we're going to have to regroup and come back and make some hard, hard decisions. In fact, some of these decisions may be out of our control.

**DR. PECORALE:**

What we discussed when we met with them, is that now off the table?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It's not off the table, but they're not able to respond to us because their own programs and projects are in jeopardy of even occurring. They may not be able to stay, which has nothing to do with this Board or this museum.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, is there any other old business?

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Is the handbook old business or new business?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

New business.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

We've been doing it for so long it seems like old business.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think it's old business.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We'll make it old, new business.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Go ahead, Gretchen.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

For years, Dan, Lance, and now Carol, Jenna and myself have been redoing this handbook. You have a copy in front of you. There are a few spots highlighted. This is the only area, these remaining areas, where we have questions. But please read through the whole handbook because you might have other suggestions to make.

Basically, it's been streamlined. It's much shorter than it used to be. It's been brought into compliance with the State and Federal Government. In fact, it was updated just a couple of weeks ago because the laws had changed regarding military family leave and so on. The wording has been tightened up.

One area that is highlighted is on page nine. That was just a question. At one point, we had eliminated all vacation days from being carried over into the next year. Now it's been added back, 15 vacation days.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I lost something here. I thought it was that we weren't going to allow any vacation days to be carried over.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Yes, but there was some discussion where certain individuals because the nature of their time and work and hours and part-time situations or whatever, it would have been grossly unfair to them, so we added some of it back, just to try to cover some of these people. Is that correct, Carol?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Yes, I think where they accrue vacation time it goes to your date of employment. For example, if your anniversary date is July 1, on July 2 you have zero vacation time. You would never be able to take a July vacation because you wouldn't have accrued your time. So enabling people to carry over – before there was no limit on how much you could carry over. This is a change.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Which is a big improvement.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Which is only 15 days. There is also a cap on it.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Which is comparable to the current cap on how many vacation days you can get paid upon leaving. That's the rationale, that because you don't get your vacation at the same time of your new year. You earn it every two weeks, you earn another quarter of a day or whatever it is, depending on how long you have worked here. It's sort of impractical.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Then since we're talking about this, because I thought this was going to come up at a later time, like the next meeting, but there is something I would suggest. If the employee is entitled to COBRA, that's not in there because not every employee is eligible for COBRA.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

It says eligible employees.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That language was taken out of the statute.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Let me just read something. Reconciliation Act, as amended, COBRA, departing employees are entitled. Some employees are not entitled. The only ones who are entitled are people who have been employed for the previous year and have been –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I don't see what you're –

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

I was looking at the –

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It's at the top. When you sit and read it, it's under the consolidated omnibus budget reconciliation, reference to the Reconciliation Act of 1986 as amended – that means all their definitions are included in this paragraph as stated in the statute, which means not everybody is always going to be covered.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Let's put in the note.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

All right, let's put in the note.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Information is available at –

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

What Tony is saying is that departing employees who are entitled --

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, entitled employees, something like that.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Okay, under the Act, whatever.

**DR. PECORALE:**

The one that's above that, about the health insurance, essentially we're saying that they can carry it forward at 100 percent of their own cost.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

That's actually what the law is.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I seem to recall something that our employees are not County employees at all. Just leave it, but I seem to recall that in order to be eligible to carry the County health insurance into retirement, there has to be some contribution of the agency. It cannot be that the – it's the Empire Plan essentially. It cannot be that the person has to be 100 percent of the cost. There has to be some connection. I think you ought to check that out with the County.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, we can check with them.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Then there is one other one that I –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

When did you have time to read this?

**DR. PECORALE:**

I got here early.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I don't think we're trying to pass this tonight.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, not at all.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

No.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Actually, doesn't this have to go back to the County Attorney's Office anyway?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

It's sort of a pretty final draft. We want to give everyone an opportunity to really look closely and then –

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Tony, I was overruled on almost everything because I said nobody gets anything.

**DR. PECORALE:**

That's what I thought.

**MR. OLVIERI:**

I was overruled.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, so that needs to be looked over. Is there additional new business?

**MR. DELUISE:**

I have some old business that I'd like to speak to the Board about. This is a wonderful museum. I think there's one place that we should move ourselves into the new age instead of looking at the past.

We have talked about this a little bit before. We need to look at the way we sell and manage our tickets. For the past few months, attendance has increased as the laser shows come in. We seriously need to look at coordination, which would not only be selling tickets at our box office, it could be selling tickets on-line. It could be managing our membership, our fundraising. People could make donations. I would like Carol – Carol, are you looking into it?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I did attend the American Association of Museums Convention in Denver, which was wonderful. I have to say that one of the things that I appreciate about Steve is he is a wonderful communicator and he's able to communicate to the Legislature and to other people how special this place is and to continue the excitement. When we've been here awhile we seem to forget.

When I was in Denver talking to Directors from all over the world, in fact, I told them I worked at the Vanderbilt Museum. "Oh, that's a historic house." "Well, yes, it's a beautiful house. We have the original furnishings." They said, "Oh, wow, that's really wonderful." "Then, of course, there is the marine museum." They say, "Wait a minute. You've got a historic mansion and a marine museum. Oh, wow." "Yes, we have a mummy and the original vintage 1920 and 1930's installation." "Wow, that's so great." "Then, of course, as you're looking out over the water –" Then they say, "Wait a minute. You're on the water? You have a view?" "Well, yes, on the gold coast. It's a really gorgeous view and people can walk down and then there is the boathouse." "There's a boathouse?" "Yes, there is. We have 43 acres. We have the curators studio." "There was a curator?" "Some day we hope to have the seaplane hangar." "You've got a seaplane hangar?" "Yes, but right now we make

due with the planetarium?" "And you've got a planetarium, too?"

I'm hoping next year the AAM meeting is in Philadelphia, and there is a special day just for Trustees. It would be great to go. But to appreciate to have a mansion, a planetarium, the marine museum, really and truly is special.

While I was there, in addition to networking and talking to people, I was looking for a few things. One was software. It turns out we do have a reservation system in our Education Department for ten years. It is actually related to Ticket Master. Talking to the people there, it doesn't take that much more of an upgrade to get us to different on-line ticketed features, reservations, and things like that. We are about five generations behind the current system. I do have a proposal from them. While I was there we did look at a few other vendors who each had other kinds of ticketing. Looking it over quickly, I think it doesn't make sense for us to go with anyone but we will be looking at all of them. I have one solid proposal here, and it's definitely something that you can do on-line reservations, print out your ticket at home, bring it here or do kiosk ticketing and print out your ticket, have a computer in the ticket booth to be able to do on-line. It's just the way we need to go. They will be able to make donations and other things.

**MR. DELUISE:**

I think we should look into moving forward on that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

What about the audio program?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I met with Antenna Audio today. I have a contract proposal to go forward. That also is exciting to be at the vendors to go through vendor to vendor. Antenna Audio owns the Discovery Channel, Discovery Audio. Again, to get to the next level here to have people able to learn more about our property, to tour with an audio hand held machine doing a tour of the grounds, is the direction we need to go. We are exploring that. I met with them today.

What was also exciting was that we can now get in as part of the system is pod casting where other on-line people can download the tour and hear it on their i-Pod. All these systems can start to get into play. We're discussing simply an audio but multi-

media – we have film. We have Vanderbilt talking that we can put on this. As you are going around and you're looking at an exhibit, you would be able to hear Vanderbilt explaining and eventually there would be video.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

You wouldn't have to listen to me anymore.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

To be able to do multiple different kinds of interpretation, and again, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but again talking to a lot of people, this is being done in a lot of different museums. We want visitors to have that experience of going back into time a little bit to feel what it was like in the 1920's and 30's. But we also need to layer the interpretation, what does that mean, and add in these other elements. It's hard because you don't want to put in new high tech stuff in order to do this, but we want to give our visitors more by using the hand-held devices, layering the interpretation. If someone wants to learn more and really get into everything there is to know about our mummy, we can get that information for them. They can download. They go into to different channels. We're talking about going to the mansion.

We are working closely with Bill Rogers, who has very generously donated to fund and work with us. I hope to meet with him and talk with him about what we have going on a little further. We will be looking in the next year into this. The focus of this next year is really having a new star projector in our theater. It's an opportunity that we have to capitalize, to sort of move to the new century, get on-line ticketing capabilities, donations, i-Pod. Really we are going to be a cutting edge planetarium. We have to upgrade everything we do, and we can. It's the perfect opportunity to do all this. That's why we really want to get the ticketing in place. We have a year to hammer this out. Our audio should get going soon. It can be here in four months in time for October, which is going to be a big month for us. It's the anniversary of the Motor Parkway. We're going to be moving forward with that.

Also, before we have to leave, you may have noticed all the posters around. Mike has been instrumental in getting us partnering with the Long Island Ad Club. The student competition this year was all about us, which is really wonderful. I really enjoyed the opportunity to go to these different universities, talk to them for about an hour about what was

special, and have the teens coming here and meeting with them here and seeing what they got excited about. This is the result of their work. We are going to be able to use some of this, take bits and pieces. It's exciting to see what excited these college students, actually high school students as well.

**MR. DELUISE:**

It was the first time in 35 years of Long Island Advertising Club that a high school placed and got a silver award. It was the Brookhaven Technical School. That was the first time ever that high school students competed with mostly college seniors. They just did a very good job. Beside the Brookhaven Technical School, they came from Farmingdale State University, Adelphi University, LIU, CW Post. Those are the ones who placed as finalists. But other colleges participated, too. They did an excellent job.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Carol, couple of questions. How many hits do we get on our website? Our website hasn't been changed, has it?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Oh, it's changed.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It's a beautiful website.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

It changes all the time.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I went on in the beginning of the school year.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

No, we changed it since this. The basic structure hasn't changed, but our special events change.

**DR. PECORALE:**

How many hits do we get?

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

I don't know recently. I don't know offhand.

**DR. PECORALE:**

The second question is, does the County Executive know about all of our films that are in storage? He supposedly is into old films. It's an interest of his. I have always said this. I still think

that if he knew about all of the Vanderbilt films that are sitting in storage that need to be taken out of storage and put into the new media, because the old films decay. We talked about Vanderbilt being on film, he did filming of his yacht tours. He did action pictures of the catching of fish all over the world and the artist, Belanski, captured that. Somewhere along the line, I think that the County has to realize that this isn't just the Vanderbilt Museum treasure. This is a County treasure because those films have historic value to Long Island and to what was on the North Shore back at the time that this was gold coast.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Absolutely.

**DR. ROGERS:**

Are these films becoming decomposed?

**DR. PECORALE:**

The last I heard –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

They are professionally stored. It's not like we have them in a closet or anything.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

They are stored in New Jersey. This is what they do. We have had some transferred, some of the film. The feature length films have been transferred to digital format.

**DR. PECORALE:**

It's expensive, right?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It's freaky to hear Willie talk.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Mrs. Dolan, at one time, was very interested in the museum. I'm going to contact the Dolans and see if they are interested in putting them all on Channel 13.

**MR. OLVIERI:**

They just bought *Newsday*.

**DR. ROGERS:**

What does it cost to restore them?

**DR. PECORALE:**

I bet we're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars. He did, if my memory serves me correctly from way back when I first came on the board, he did hundreds of thousands of feet of film.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

There were 56 –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

He actually has the stats in one of his books. I forget the number, but he actually has the stats. We have an inventory of what we have.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Yes, we have an inventory. Some of it has been put to other media, like video and digital. We would like to do it to all of them.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I could see if the Dolans wanted to do a special on their Channel 12 of the Vanderbilt films. If we got any of them that have been restored, frankly, I'll be honest with you, I would love to have the opportunity to just see what we've got.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The intent was that this building -- was that you would come here and one of the things you could see in orienting yourselves to the museum was to see some of those films.

**DR. PECORALE:**

What do we need to be able to see the films? Do we need a videotape recorded?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, we have the films in a condition that they could be seen now, some of them.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

They are shown from time to time.

**DR. ROGERS:**

Maybe we should put them on disk.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

If we get the multimedia going, that could be on our website. You could come in and out with our hand held devices. At least

three of the films that I believe were transferred to other media, disk and video. A lot more footage –

**DR. PECORALE:**

Steve, have you seen these?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I never have, but I would love for the next meeting if we could have something set up so we can take a look at that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Sure.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

You will love it. To be able to hear Willie talking in color – there is a little section where it's in color.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

We want to hear the real Willie, not you.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, the real Willie, not me. I'm looking at his portrait and I recently made a discovery that I want to share with you about Willie. I'm a Willie history nut.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

A Willie Freak.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'm a Willie freak. I want to give you an idea of who he is. I recently finished my second book, which was on his cousin, Alfred. Alfred goes down on the Lusitania. I'm all wrapped up in trying to figure out how the Lusitania gets where it is and all this kind of stuff.

Here's the story. Willie's father, I think I told you this -- I have this great conspiracy theory – that Willie's father stayed on with the railroad and was interested in 1899. He took over the railroad when Cornelius, II, died because he was interested in this taking over global transportation. He wanted to get this maritime global transportation effort. He tried to do it with certain players that are around. The majority of the year, for

example, of the Senate, the Chairman of the Republican Party, it just happened to be Republican.

He tried to put all this together. One of the ways that Willie K., I, put it together was that he married Ann Rutherford Harriman. The name Harriman may or may not ring true with you, but her husband, Edward Harriman was the fellow who brought the Union Pacific back to life. Harriman has this whole railroad going from Chicago to the West Coast. Harriman's cousin marries our Willie's dad. When Cornelius, II, dies, and that's Willie K., I's, brother, the other guy who is running the big railroad, New York Central dies, he begs his brother to take over the railroad. Willie K., I, says, "Okay, I'll do it."

I was thinking, what was Willie K., II, our guy, why is he important. How does he play? So we all know that he married Virginia. We all know that Virginia Fair, was the daughter of James Fair, who was of the Comstock Lode, who later was known as Senator James Fair who died in 1896. Tessie Oldright, Virginia's sister, and Virginia became recipients of Senator James's estate. Herman Oldright – and you need a map to follow this one – but Herman Oldright was the husband of Tessie. I discovered that Herman was an the American Representative of the North German Lloyd, who was the second largest marine fleet in the world at the turn of the century. Well, that was just great because Willie married Virginia. The Senator founded the North German Lloyd. We all know the North German Bismarck – you spell it Bismarck. Remember the ship the Bismarck? They owned the Bismarck. They built the Bismarck.

When the Americans got tied into and started to own the North German Lloyd, Willie K, II, married into and locked in the North German Lloyd, so that Willie K, I, now had a German fleet of maritime ships in 1901/1902 timeframe that could control the Atlantic. At the same time, his friend, Morgan, worked with White Star Line, which included a ship we all know as the Titanic. So now the British are freaking out. Why? They know that the Americans either own the North German Lloyd or control it or the Americans own the Light Star Line, which is the Titanic and cousins, and they no longer have troop ships. So they built the Lusitania as future troop ships, which is why Alfred dies. At the same time, Harriman goes out in 1905, and he tried to strike a deal with the Russians and the Japanese so that at the end of the Russo Japanese War, there would be a global transportation network, since he had already bought the Pacific Fast Mail which

was a shipping fleet in the Pacific. They could go all the way around the world by rail to Japan and from Japan to Mongolia, and Mongolia to the Baltic's, from the Baltic's to the eastern door of Europe, from Europe back on the White Star Line to New York, from New York, of course --

**DR. PECORALE:**

I want to see the film.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Oh, you want to see the film. Wait, okay, our Willie married and gets control of all of this. He is a key element. He is royalty. You don't even know how important this guy is. When Al Velocci put out a book on the Motor Parkway – it's the stuff that we have in our archives that drives how important this museum is to some extent. It's the scholars doing stuff that comes out that matters. You're right. We need to have the movies, and we need to have people understand who Willie was. But for the first time in my life, I realize how important he was because why? Because Teddy Roosevelt got very upset that Morgan and his pal, Vanderbilt, were actually going to put in another Presidential campaign, and that's when he started his anti-monopoly approach. That's why Willie is important because he was a big part of history.

**DR. ROGERS:**

That was a very interesting story, but I come back here. I was interested in education. I was interested in development. I got interested in the dinosaurs. Nothing has really happened with the dinosaurs. I made certain commitments and certain offers and it just stands still. I turn around and we heard about the audio system. I offered to give some help there a couple of years ago. Now you're telling me about something very, very interesting, the films. I'm interested in that. But there is no sense in me saying, "I would like to help. I would like to do something," because none of the things I have said I would like to do have come to pass. They are sitting there. I'm not going to sit here forever. One of the Legislators may not put me on the Board next year. I'm interested in helping. What is going to happen to some of these projects in some short reasonable period of time and whether or not any of the offers or suggestions that I have made will be carried forward?

**DR. PECORALE:**

I'll tell you, I'm interested in those films for very definitive reasons. I think that the history of Long Island is not being

taught in the schools on Long Island. We're talking about globalization. We're talking about everything other than an area that I can – needs to be developed in the history classes of the schools on Long Island. I have to talk about the Zues family, who had a very definitive reason for producing something that lead to why the airplane industry was big on Long Island -- those little Zues fasteners. The Zues building in West Islip is falling apart.

I think that the whole story of Republic, the whole story of the airplane industry on Long Island – I think those films are a part of our history that is dying. I've been an educator for a long time, and I can tell you, my classes were some of the first classes that came to this building when I was a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Remember the guy who came to do the evaluation of the museum? He was one of my sixth grade students. He came to do it strictly because he remembered when he was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, that his 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher took him here. When he saw my name on the Board, he jumped out. He wanted to see me. I truly think that we need to get those films and have them become apart of the history of Long Island, not just sitting in a loft in New Jersey wasting away.

**DR. ROGERS:**

I agree with you.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

But Bill asked a very critical question. Some of these plans, some of these dreams, some of these projects, languished.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Maybe Bill can have one or two of the reels of film from one of the voyages be put into DVD or possibly into 16 – what's the new way of doing motion pictures today? It's digitalized. Maybe we could have one of them digitized.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

What Bill is saying is that he has already done stuff.

**MR. DELUISE:**

We need to get action plans and get things in motion, like the audio program, which Bill has been trying to do. We should do it. Carol has all the information we need.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

He's also talking about the airplane hangar. He pledged a huge amount of money and it's gone nowhere because people reneged on that obligation to him. It's terrible. Bill is not a young guy. As he said, he's not going to be here forever. It's not right what was done. This wasn't.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I look at the station that has all the historic programs all the time. They have people who are restoring films from history and showing them on History Channel.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

But, Tony, you and I have turned around and donated money and stuff, and it didn't get done either. Do you remember the translations that you and I put a lot of money out of our pockets and it just didn't happen?

**DR. PECORALE:**

I was told that was done. I was told they did do the translations.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

Some of the translations were done, but we've had some changes here, as you know, with Lance leaving and –

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It doesn't matter. It's not that. To keep turning back to Bill –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The bottom line is that Bill has a very good point.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

And he's been the most generous Trustee I know on this Board.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

You mentioned the Dolan family before. They have already made their contribution of \$300,000 to this institution.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

I didn't know that.

**DR. PECORALE:**

And the wife of Dolan, who is in charge of the Knicks – I attended meetings with her.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I sat with Charles Dolan with the Chairwoman of the Dolan Foundation. We ate lunch, and with Alison's help, we did get a \$300,000 contribution, which was supposed to be a first contribution, but because our other contributions go nowhere, there is no reason for them to make an additional contribution. What's the point? How are we supposed to raise money if, in fact, we have a major contributor whose promises are never kept?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Exactly.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Anyway, can I have a motion to adjourn?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Motion.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

There is no reason for an executive session. Oh, wait, before we leave, our Operating Budget is due or has been requested by the County Executive.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

By June 9.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

How are we going to get the budget by then? Carol can prepare an Operating Budget. The question is, how do we approve an Operating Budget before we meet again?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Other than having a meeting before June 9 or on June 9?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I wish it was that simple. What I'm going to have to suggest is that the Executive Committee meet because what we're looking for is to have April's numbers in the bag, so that we know that the projections that we made for this year were logical and make sense. We don't have April's numbers yet. We are waiting to have April's numbers. We're going to get to the end of May and then we want to put together some kind of a meeting and the Executive Committee will approve it. Then we will take it to the

County Executive. I don't know that we can do much better than that until we have an Operating Budget for next year.

**MS. GHIORSI-HART:**

We're having a meeting set up next week with our accountant. We can sit down and we can have an Operating Budget.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

So what's the bottom line, Steve?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The bottom line is that we're proposing that we approve through the Executive Committee, which is not binding to the Board, but then we can vote on it at the June meeting. We have a motion and a second to adjourn. All in favor? Opposed? **(Vote: 6/0/0/9 Absent: Mr. D'Orazio, Mr. Swinson, Ms. Gicas, Mr. Macchione & Ms. LeBow. Four vacant positions.)**

**(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.)**

**SG:ap**