

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on January 15, 2009, in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman - President
David D'Orazio - 1st Vice President
Matthew Swinson - 2nd Vice President
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones - Secretary
Michael B. DeLuise - Treasurer
Daniel Olivieri - Trustee
Sarah Anker - Trustee
Dr. Anthony Pecorale - Trustee
Noel Gish - Trustee
Dr. William Rogers - Trustee
Thomas D. Glascock - Trustee
Carol Ghiorso-Hart - Acting Executive Director
Legislator William Lindsay - 8th Legislative District
Lynn Dwyer - Candidate Board Member
Terry Pearsall - Aide to Legislator Lindsay
Barbara Oster - Staff
Lorraine Vernola - Staff
Lance Reinheimer - Budget Review Office
Peter Newman - Staff
Ann Marie Pastore - Stenographer

Absent:

Susan LeBow - Trustee
Arthur M. Sillman, Jr. - Trustee

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

DR. GITTELMAN:

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

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would like to acknowledge the Presiding Officer, Legislator Bill Lindsay, and his Aide, Terry Pearsall. Thank you for joining us. Also in attendance is Lance Reinheimer, Budget Review Office.

It is my understanding that we did not approve the minutes not of the meeting prior, but the meeting prior to that. Can I have a motion to approve the minutes for the prior meeting? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

MR. GLASCOCK:

I'll abstain. I wasn't at the last meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Welcome aboard. Thank you for joining us. **The minutes are approved. (Vote: 9/0/1/5 Abstained: Mr. Glascock. Not Present: Ms. Anker. Absent: Ms. LeBow & Mr. Sillman. Two vacant positions.)**

We usually do introduce ourselves when we have a new Board Member. If we can do that, I would appreciate it. Please go around the horn and start, Dan, if you would.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Sure, Dan Olivieri.

MR. SWINSON:

Matt Swinson.

MR. GLASCOCK:

Tom Glascock.

DR. PECORALE:

Tony Pecorale.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Steve Gittelman.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Carol Hart.

MR. DELUISE:

Mike DeLuise.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Dave D'Orazio. Welcome on board.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

Gretchen Oldrin-Mones. So happy you're here.

MR. GISH:

Noel Gish. Good to see you.

DR. ROGERS:

Bill Rogers.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Each year we elect new officers at the November meeting. A slate of officers was nominated. The slate is non-binding. Anyone can make nominations from the floor for any officer, for any member of the slate. We can vote for them individually. The November nominations are strictly advisory. Dan, you were involved in that committee.

MR. OLIVIERI:

The slate nominated was, and let me start from the bottom, Treasurer, Mike DeLuise; Secretary, Gretchen Oldrin-Mones; 2nd Vice President, Matthew Swinson; 1st Vice President, David D'Orazio; and President, Steve Gittelman. That was the slate that was proposed from the Nominating Committee.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Does anybody have anyone that they would like to nominate for any one of those five positions? Yes, Tony?

DR. PECORALE:

I move that the nominations be closed.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We have a motion. Do we have a second?

MR. OLIVIERI:

I'll second it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 10/0/0/5 Not Present: Ms. Anker. Absent: Ms. LeBow & Mr. Sillman. Two vacant positions.) It carries unanimously.**

DR. PECORALE:

I move that the Secretary be authorized to cast one vote for the nominations.

MR. DELUISE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 10/0/0/5 Not Present: Ms. Anker. Absent: Ms. LeBow & Mr. Sillman. Two vacant positions.) It carries unanimously.**

The Presiding Officer is here. I would like to inject at this juncture to have the Presiding Officer make any comments to us. He has been a stalwart supporter of the museum, and we do owe him gratitude. I'm very glad that he's here.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I just wanted to come down and talk to you folks to fill you in on a number of initiatives that are going on, but I can't be sure that any of them are going to work.

Just to review a little bit. Last year when the problem occurred with the investment community and the trust fund took such a heavy hit, we had approved our Operating Budget. In the Operating Budget was a subsidy of \$800,000 to carry the museum through this year until we could restructure. The accompanying resolution that would identify the funds, because the budget didn't have any financial back-up to it, was to raise park fees, which haven't been raised in seven years and probably should be raised without the crisis with the Vanderbilt. It passed, and then it was subsequently vetoed by the County Executive. We weren't able to get enough votes to overturn the veto, which has caused a flurry of all kinds of activity in an effort to sustain the museum both short-term and long-term.

There are two pending resolutions before the Legislature that will be voted on on February 3. One is to fund \$500,000 using offsets in the budget that have been identified. The sponsor is Jon Cooper.

The problem with that is just yesterday I had a meeting with the County Executive, our Budget Review Office, as well as the County Executive's Budget people, and the sales tax figures, which is where the County gets most of its revenue from, were horrendous. The fourth quarter, our sales tax revenue is down a minimum of \$21 million, and it's still adding up. They think it could go as high as \$30,000. We're probably looking at deficits of \$60 million in 2009 already that we have to plug. To use \$500,000 without any increase in revenue I don't think is going to fly.

The second resolution is by Vivian Vilorio-Fisher that, again, restructures the whole park fees issue. They will sunset. It's just for this year. She is taking some of the objections out of the original bill. I'm not sure whether it's going to pass or not. We will have to see. That would bring about approximately the original \$800,000 that was promised. They are both long-term solutions, or at least annual solutions to get us through this year.

On the short-term basis, I have a resolution that I am sponsoring to hire outside counsel that will go back into the original will, go back into court to see if the original terms of the bequest to the County can be modified. If need be it would pierce the corpus that we haven't done because it's against the original bequest.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Mr. Lindsay, you're referring to what, an application to the Attorney General to invade the corpus of the endowment?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I don't know the legal terminology. We're hiring outside counsel.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Okay, but basically it's to invade the endowment and take some money from there for a while until we can do it. I know that was an email that was passed around to most of the Board Members.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

The other thing is Jon has a Procedural Motion that we will be voting on on the 3rd of February as well that will bring down the endowment to the corpus. There is still about \$100,000 above the original corpus. The reason it can't be done without resolution is because it's an annual resolution that's passed, and it was already maxed out on – I think it had a cap of \$1.2 million that was passed last year. I think we already hit that. I know talking with Carol there is some disagreement on the accounting of it. I'm not getting into that. That's between you guys and Budget Review.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Can I just make a comment?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Go ahead.

DR. GITTELMAN:

When I first started here, we did not go for annual resolutions in order to obtain the interest income. The interest income was automatically flowed to the museum resolution. The first time that I recall resolutions being passed and bills being passed to support the flow was when there was a change in the mix of the fund so that a good portion of the interest was tied up in stocks. Then it was required by the Legislature to make an annual commitment, but that in the will it says that we are entitled to the income automatically, and that may not require a resolution.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I don't know about what was. All I know is that the resolution that was passed by Jon the last time around had a cap on it. How that came about, I have no idea. They told me it can't be done unless we either remove the cap altogether or else pass another Procedural Resolution. It's down to \$100,000 either way, so how to get it done, do it.

Something is coming into play, as well. We're also examining the possibility of some kind of synergy between our Community College and the museum to see if the property can be used more for different purposes, that if there could be some kind of offset, if there could be some type of – the college is a big institution. You guys are small. Maybe we could eliminate some duplication of services, payroll, accounting, maybe security. I don't know. I'm just thinking off the top of my head.

I had the President of the College here and the Vice President of the College, some of their architectural engineers, and we toured the facility. I haven't really heard any more about it, but you're liable to hear some more about that, as well.

Those are all the different efforts that are going on. I think that one of the short-term efforts will happen. I'm optimistic that the appropriating resolution bringing it down to the corpus will happen. I'm not sure about the other two to get you through the year, to be honest. My best advice to all of you is to cut expenses to the bone to survive. That's pretty much where we are.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is it okay if we ask you questions?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Sure.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

You said that you were looking at ways in which you might bring Suffolk Community College and tie it to the museum. One of the things that I would caution is that all the employees at the college are part of the New York State Teachers Retirement System and also the Employees Retirement System, of which our people here are not. That would be a big nut to crack.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

The particulars haven't even been developed to that state yet. It's a search type of thing right now. The reason we considered that is for a couple of reasons. There is some synergy here that you're both licensed by State Education Department, that the college is a big institution. Some of the areas of the grounds and some of the buildings lend themselves to an educational – the planetarium is an educational facility -- just to get some more uses out of it to generate some more income.

The other thing is that capital programs that we do for the college are usually half state funded, so that it brings in a whole new revenue stream of help. Whether that will happen or whether there will be any interest there, I don't know, but at this stage, if we don't take dramatic action, this place is going to close.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The endowment is currently invested in short-term paper, approximately 50 percent of it. Would you folks consider putting it into higher yielding paper that might be longer term to yield a higher income from the endowment?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I think that we would consider anything but it has to be super safe. You have no room to play with. There is absolutely no wiggle room. I'm not an investment person.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're yielding one to one-and-a half percent on half. That half could be brought up to five. Five percent of \$8 million is \$400,000, where currently we're struggling with a projection of \$225,000.

(Ms. Anker entered the meeting at 7:35 P.M.)

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I think that we're open. I don't know whether Bank of America is the best investment vehicle. I don't really know. I have Lance here from Budget Review who might be able to answer more specific questions on that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

There is a proposal, and I received quite a bit of feedback from members of the Board in opposition, but just because the door is there with the discussion with the County Executive and I think Lou D'Amaro was talking about loans. Could you give us your opinion on that?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I'm opposed to any kind of loan. We don't have enough money to operate the place. How are you going to pay back a loan? I had this discussion with Jim Morgo the other day. If someone is willing to give a loan against the endowment, what happens if we don't pay the loan back?

DR. GITTELMAN:

You guys have to pay it back. That's what happens.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I don't think that's a solution. Rather than borrow money and pay the interest on the money, I would rather go the route to pierce the endowment.

MR. GISH:

Or raise money.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

And raise money. I think it's a matter of time. This happened so quickly that it really caught everybody off guard. We need time. We need to buy time to try to come up with a long-term fix. I know that you guys have been talking about caterers and a lot of other things. I think the Legislature wanted more specific plans where if we put money in, what's the long-term plan? What's the short-term plan? How are we going to get through this? Whether it's \$500,000 or \$800,000, is it enough money to carry the museum for this year? What happens next year? I think those are some of the questions that tripped up the original resolution. It wasn't that everything was in line. We're not being accusatory of anybody. I'm just saying that's where it had a problem. I don't know how you do it. The biggest expense is payroll. In my opinion, it's to see if you could cut back on payroll, whether you let some people go or have them work half time or have some kind of furlough for a couple of weeks and close it down for a couple of weeks with just a skeleton crew. Try to stretch that out until I could get some money flowing again.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Legislator, if I could, please.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Yes.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I think some positive press would help this institution greatly because as a result of some of the negative press that the museum received, we lost a lot of revenue in weddings. We lost a lot of weddings that were booked.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I'm sure you did.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

If we could try to work around it and come up with something positive.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

The positive press will come from bail-out plans being approved. The museum will be open for another year at least while we work on something else. We're facing the same problems with our nursing home. The County Executive and the Legislature have been at odds over whether the County should operate a nursing home or not. Every time the Executive – every time there is a story in the paper, we lose another patient. Nobody wants to be in a facility that's not going to be there. No bride wants to book a wedding through an institution that might not be here. I understand that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The schools, as well, don't want to book trips for the spring if they feel we might close.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I'm not here to micromanage or anything like that but just to tell you the things that I'm doing or that the Legislature is doing so you get a fair picture of where we are. I know there are a lot of people working on a lot of positive things, like the foundation, to catering, to vending machines and everything that you are trying to do to shape a better financial picture here. I'm not here to be judgmental about that or to meddle in that in any way. I'm just here to tell you where I am with both the short-term and the long-term basis. Yes, sir.

DR. ROGERS:

I would like a little clarification. I understand there is \$400,000 left in the endowment. I also understand that it was invested at one and a half percent. If we could get 5 percent, that would be \$20,000. Why are we settling on one and a half percent? Who makes that decision?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

First of all, there isn't \$400,000 in the endowment. There is \$8.3 million in the endowment. The corpus is \$8.2 million. You have about \$100,000 above the corpus now. In early December when the market was in freefall, I was one of a few that made a decision to get out of the market and to put it in cash to protect it because it was falling so rapidly. We didn't want to lose the corpus. I don't have any objections if a new financial vehicle was found that's safe that would produce more interest. That would be wonderful. That would absolutely be wonderful.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We did have some discussion – I had a discussion with Christine Malafi about the legality of if we invested the money, and I'm just going to pick something, I'm not recommending it, but let's say we went long-term paper at a yield of 5 percent. Again, the value of that paper, the book value of the paper dropped because interest rates went up. The yield remained constant, but because the book value dropped, the corpus in the endowment now went below the \$8.2 million, that that form of passive shift would not trigger the fall.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Could we get the financial people up here? Lance, what's the process to change the investment option?

MR. REINHEIMER:

I think right now half of it is in the short-term bond fund, and half of it's in cash. The overall return is about 3 percent. I don't think the problem is with the

investment manager today. We made these changes last fall. It went in equities in November. We made that decision within a day. I think investment manager is looking for some signal from us that we're ready to look at long-term. I think they are waiting to see what we're doing with the fund. I think they are basically on hold right now. They haven't told me that, but just by looking the way it's managed, they have half in cash. I think they are just waiting to see what our plans are, and then I think they will look more long-term and make investments accordingly.

Just to answer your question about the \$100,000, all the income that you earned last year has been distributed. You got distribution at the end of December. What's in there, primarily, right now out of the \$100,000, is pretty much capital gains. It's not income. The only income that it would have earned was from the point that you got your last distribution to today. You got your last distribution the beginning of January. We need some kind of legal instrument to distribute that money. That's why they're doing it as a Procedural Motion.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think our discussion with you, Lance, was that the prior bill that was passed, that Mr. Cooper sponsored covered \$1.2 million. By our accounting, the first payment made in January did not go against that \$1.2 million. It went against the prior year, so that there should have been 12 \$100,000 payments.

MR. REINHEIMER:

We looked back over ten years, and the way the distribution you get January 3 or 4 of each year is income that is earned the previous December. You're right, but in your calendar year you receive \$1.2 million on an ongoing continuous basis; where we were reauthorizing \$1.2 million it wasn't a problem. Being conservative and you're ending that authority to distribute realized capital gains to make the distribution of another \$100,000 in January from realized capital gain, it's questionable what period that distribution is. You have your \$1.2 million each year for the past six or seven years. Prior to that you got \$100,000 a year from 1995 on. It's hard to say. You're right that in our review the \$100,000 in January was for December, but it was an ongoing basis. The income you got in that distribution was earned in December.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I understand that, but in terms of what I'm saying and in terms of existing legislation that covered the \$1.2 million, the way if you start from the beginning from the first \$1 million piece of legislation, you could probably add up the 13 years, you may find that we're now \$100,000 short.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's questionable.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That is questionable, Lance.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's why we're conservative. We're making the distribution. The Presiding Officer is making distribution. That distribution you get of the \$100,000 is primarily realized capital gains, so you're getting the \$100,000. The mechanism is there. You have the support from the Legislature at this time. I think they will look long-term on investments once it's settled, and we know what direction we're going into.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

And to answer your question, Noel, is we'll retain counsel. That will come out of our legislative account, so it's not off your dime. We'll see if we can get relief from the original Vanderbilt trust. If you did invest in some kind of long-term document, and if the value of the corpus reduced, then that's what we're looking for right now. We haven't talked to the specialized counsel yet. We have to go to an RFP. We can't go out and hire anybody. My in-house counsel thinks that if it goes before a judge and it's laid out to the judge, here are the options, they're sitting on \$8.2 million, they aren't able to pierce that in some way because of either long-term investment policy or whatever, you have to close the doors. There aren't too many viable options there. I don't know whether the Vanderbilt family would challenge that. Maybe they will. I don't know.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We have been told that the Vanderbilt family approached --

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I don't have any knowledge of that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I was told that.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Approached who?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We were told that they approached a Legislator.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I have no knowledge of that. I'm sure I would have heard that. But that's where we are. I wanted you to hear it from the horse's mouth.

MR. GISH:

Just a question on the proposal by Vilorio-Fisher on the parks fees. I think the hang-up was the sunset clause initially for that one year. If that's resolved and since the vote was fairly close the first time, do you think that a sunset clause in those parks fees will resolve that issue for the Legislature?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Vivian feels that way. She has been counting votes and working both sides of the aisle. She feels that way. I just talked to her about it today. There were a number of objections to the resolutions. She has tried to modify them all.

The other thing, in all honesty, is I should reveal that we have been talking to the hotel/motel people about -- and I had a meeting today with State Assembly people about hotel/motel tax. In Suffolk County it's three-quarters of one percent. It's the lowest in the State. Nassau County is three percent. We would need enabling legislation from the State to raise that. My proposal for them is that I would like to raise it to two percent. I'd like a dedicated fund to keep our historic cultural museums alive in Suffolk County. It isn't just you guys having trouble. We're having trouble all over in this very, very tough economy. Those discussions have been ongoing, even with the hotel/motel operators and they have been going pretty

good. It could still hit some bumps, but the discussions are going pretty good. That's another thing that is out there.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Could you give us a sense of the Legislature's intent on the Board's Oversight Committee?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

It's really Jon and Vivian's legislation. I forget whether it's Jon's or Vivian's legislation.

MR. GISH:

It's Jon's.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I just think that the institution deserves some special attention because it's in trouble. Are there any other questions or anything else that I can enlighten you with on my end of it?

MR. DELUISE:

Any direction on where we should be putting our emphasis?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Cut expenses. Pray for another day. It's got to get better.

DR. ROGERS:

Are there any interim funds that may be available for the next two or three months?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

That's what we're working on. What I described to you was short-term for this year and long-term.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you very much.

MR. GISH:

We appreciate your time.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And thank you for your support for your fundraiser.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

You're welcome.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Audit Committee.

MR. OLIVIERI:

We just got our report in from the auditors. We will have it distributed and probably vote on it at the next meeting for 2007. That means we're pretty much caught up.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Maybe I took that out of sequence, but was there any discussion or anything else that you wanted to discuss? Okay, so that's your report on the audit?

MR. OLIVIERI:

That's it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I mentioned that there has been an Oversight Committee appointed. The guiding legislation for that Oversight Committee is in your folders. It speaks to the issue of overseeing our fundraising efforts. Legislation has been passed that there is now an Oversight Committee. Please read the legislation. I think it's going to be something that could be a tremendous asset to us. I'm hoping that it will increase the amount of communication we have with the Legislature and County government as a whole. We have never had a formal channel where folks are going to be here all the time, so we should welcome it. I hope that we are still invited to come down to meetings and to join in the debates when they occur there. I would hate to see that part of it cut off.

One of the things this could lead to is help. The County has tremendous resources. Having people here that can report and say if we provide transparency I think they will see that we're making a fine effort. I welcome them coming. Is there any discussion you'd like to – I realize this is a little unusual. It's a first for me, but what the heck? It's here. Does anybody have any questions or comments?

Not that this was my idea, but I did say that we should come up with a joint vision for the future with County government. If we're pushing one end, and they're tugging at the other, we may be tugging at opposite directions. It's possible. The more communication we have the better off we are. Although it's not always comfortable to have people looking over our shoulders, maybe they're just here to help us. If we could look at it that way, we'll make something positive out of it. Noel.

MR. GISH:

I'm in favor of the Oversight Committee only because of the fact that it forces the Legislature to come in and see what we're doing. I think that's one of the things that we have lacked in the past, that communication between the Legislature and the Vanderbilt. I know there are a number of Legislators who have never been here. It's essential that they get an idea of what's happening. That avenue of communication may be a real plus for us. I don't look at that as a negative. I look at it as a real positive.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think we're very lucky, because they don't often give institutions this much attention. We will not starve for lack of it. That's the Oversight Committee. I think it's just something we have to see how it plays out. Any other questions about that?

Finance Committee, Michael.

MR. DELUISE:

The Finance Committee, again, if we hadn't had the problem with the stock market and the economy, I think it would have been a very good year for us.

One of the things Carol has been working really hard on is looking at our finances. Maybe she can talk about that in your report. With the admission fees being increased and some of the other things happening, there might be some light at the end of the tunnel. I hope that the weather in February during President's Week, which is usually the best week or one of the best weeks of the year, to be terrific. We are, and again Carol will talk about it, but on Monday if anybody is around, we're going to be filming a TV commercial that the TV station is hoping to get up in time to promote President's Week. We might be able to promote a little bit more. We're doing the best with our finances. What happened in the stock market is a little bit beyond our control. Is there anything you want to add, Carol?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Just that this is the focus of my attention right now, obviously, our finances. We have been working very hard with a number of people both from Budget Review Office, the Legislature, and the County Executive's Office to really do an analysis. We also have been reaching out to many, many outside businesses looking at new partnerships and relationships. The only way we're really going to make it through is to focus on these other kinds of relationships, marketing, our Friends' group and reaching out to people, letting them know who we are and what we have to offer. This should help not only admissions but donations. We have gotten a huge amount of interest. The publicity, while scary for some people in some way, has impacted our ability to book not only site use and weddings but also school programs.

On the other hand, people are becoming more aware of how we are funded and the fact that Suffolk County hasn't been writing us a check to operate and that the Vanderbilts, as well, have not been behind us. We have been getting more donations, so far not very large ones, but we're working very hard. I will talk a little bit more about that in my report.

I have been asked, and there is a resolution that by the 15th of every month, I need to let a number of people know in both the Legislature and the County Executive's Office what our projected needs are for the following month in the hopes that maybe we'll get some funds for whatever distribution is needed.

You will see attached to your agenda what our projections are. Barbara worked on this yesterday. This shows what we think we need help with to get through the end of February, which is about \$45,000. That's assuming a February break. That's not record breaking. We were a little bit realistic. Last year was spectacular. We had no days of snow. We have to assume we're going to have one or two days this year where we will take a hit. All things considered, we do think we're going to need \$45,000 additional monies to be able to get through February and pay some bills.

DR. PECORALE:

I know you do a very good job at notifying school districts in Suffolk County. Are we reaching out to Nassau County at all this year?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, we sent out brochures to Nassau and Suffolk. We have a meeting tomorrow. We're going to do some new initiatives for reaching out. We are reaching out to the teachers' unions.

DR. PECORALE:

That would be a big plus if we could get their support.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I am focusing on where I can cut. We are cutting to the bone. We will talk a little more later about that. There is only so far we can cut without impacting our ability to also generate and serve our school children and have the ice cleared. It's a very complicated site, but we are looking at expenses, and we have made a really good change here. We're going to in-house security and phasing out the private company. It's probably going to be another month before we're completely back in-house. That should be \$50,000 to \$75,000 that we'll save this year.

One of the reasons it's saving money is because instead of having two outsourced security people around the clock during the daylight hours when we have other staff on-site who can be called for backup if the fire alarm – and a lot of this is about being responsive to fire alarms – that a grounds person can run up and check it out. Whenever there is anyone else working on the property, they will now have additional duties to be able to run to the security booth to help. We're looking at things like that. We're really looking at ways people can multi-task, get out of their area and use their time as well as they can. But there is only so far down that we are going to be able to cut, unfortunately.

MR. SWINSON:

Carol, where are we now with full and part-time employees?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Okay, as of about two days ago, we were 15 full-time – next week will be 14 full-time because our gift shop manager actually is going back to school, so he is dropping back to part-time, and we will not be replacing him as a full-time person. We had 53 part-time people who had hours in the last four or five months. Again, those hours range from 25 hours a week to maybe two or three. We will be working on some full-time equivalencies to get a better sense. The full-time staff, for the most part, is in our interpretation/education area. They only come in when we need them, such as when we have a class booked, or a school group coming in, or when we're open to the public. We have eliminated some days. We're trying to get our visitors to come when we're open. The gift shop area, planetarium, admissions, seating people, that's really our part-time staff. Security now is part-time. Again, most of the part-time people are here really when they are doing something that is income generating.

The problem – and we put these numbers out here, but there is about an \$800,000 carrying cost if we close down. If we close down, it costs \$800,000 with maybe four people just to keep things going. Once you've paid for that, then we make money. When we really sat down and analyzed, "What if we closed down the museum part to the public?" We would lose money. "What if we closed down this part?" We lose money. Once you paid for your administration and your heat, as you need, for the roadways to be cleared, for some of these essential services, we make money in all the other cost centers. Really long-term what we have to do is just create more. We have to spend more. For every \$100,000 we invest in staff or services, we make \$100,000 or more, if you look at it that way. We have already paid for that essential core.

Now we have to start making more of an investment to bring things in. That's why we're looking at also the caterers. We don't have that money for that initial investment. If we did, maybe we could be handling catering and retail a little bit

better. But knowing that we don't have that money, we're going outside. We've got two proposals from catering facilities interested in coming, in providing not only a bistro café for our visitors and serving our visitors, but then being our in-house caterers for big functions like weddings. That's sort of part of the deal.

DR. GITTELMAN:

One of our caterers has agreed to give us an advance. Given that they have agreed to give us an advance and given the crisis that we're in, I think we have to consider anyone who will give us a substantial advance. I realize this is not a place to negotiate, at this point.

The other problem is that they want access to the boathouse. The boathouse is not usable. In order to facilitate this, we're going to have to give them really what is the garage. The garage is one of our best classrooms, if not our only best classroom. We have to make compromises, but they are willing to, at least by this writing, advance us \$100,000. If we are struggling to survive and if we're not going to be here in March if we don't do something now, maybe we ought to take one of these proposals seriously – all of them seriously. But one who will give us \$100,000 in advance we really ought to do something about.

The other possibility is, and I know that it almost seems laughable, but it's not, if we have anything that we can sell that is not part of our permanent collection, which the County does not own title to because it hasn't been accessioned, then we are to consider items that are not accessioned to be sold.

MS. ANKER:

Can I ask a question, and also relating to the auditing report that's going to be coming out soon, has there been a complete inventory taken? Is that available?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We do inventories. We have a complete inventory. I'm not speaking of items that are accessioned, which is the vast majority of the inventory. There are a few select items that are not accessioned that we might want to consider.

MS. ANKER:

So there is a complete inventory of the museum numbered and dated?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Absolutely.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's all part of when we are accredited, as an accredited museum.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's part of the reaccreditation process.

DR. PECORALE:

We have the mummy case, which we could sell.

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, the mummy case is –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

He's talking about the gift shop mummy case.

DR. PECORALE:

I might be able to get you another one.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm sorry. You threw me off there.

DR. PECORALE:

I bet you could get \$1,000 for that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But there may be other items in the collection that we should consider selling, as a survival mechanism. What I would like to do is get a list of items that are not part of our collection that we can sell. I am not asking for things that we are looking forward to selling. I am not asking for things that we would like to sell. I am asking for things that we are allowed to sell.

MS. ANKER:

What are those items? Do you have anything specifically in mind?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I don't know. I have been told of one thing, but then I was told it wasn't.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think there might be a car that's not accessioned, an old car on the property. There might be a few things that we have –

DR. GITTELMAN:

There was some debate over the cigar store Indian.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think that is accessioned.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I was told it wasn't.

MR. GISH:

Since we're talking about that, I might as well let you know so you can say yes or no, but I made preliminary inquiries to Verizon to see whether they would be interested in putting up a cell tower on 43 acres of property. I'm not locking the Trustees into that. I wanted you to know right off the bat, but I started it just to see whether that's a possibility and whether or not that could be put on the property and whether we could generate annual funds from a cell tower. I know when I leave here, I have no communication once I leave Normandy. I would imagine that that's got to be the same for many residents in the area. If we do it in a sophisticated way – and I'm not looking for a plastic tree – but if we could do it in such a way that it could be placed on the property and it was useable and we could generate some funds from it, I would like the Trustees' approval just to proceed with the final approval being before the Board.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We investigated this in great detail over a period of almost a year and a half, and the obstacle eventually came not from anyone on this Board, because we felt it was a good idea. Unfortunately, the obstacle came because we were told this is parkland and we couldn't do it.

MR. GISH:

Yes, I actually have a question in to the Legislature about that, whether we might be able to –

DR. GITTELMAN:

But if we could get the proposal together and present it to the County Legislature, their state of mind might be different today.

MR. GISH:

My concern is this. If, in fact, I have the same problem that the Parks people have, maybe the Parks people would be in better communication with the County with a cell tower on this property.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But we're not part of Parks. We would go directly through the County. We normally fall under the jurisdictions of the Parks Committee but not the Parks –

MR. GISH:

I'm just talking about communication with how to resolve this.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We need County approval to do this, but this might be the climate to do this. I would encourage you to do it.

MR. GISH:

I'm in the preliminary stages right now.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Don't stop at Verizon, then.

MR. GISH:

I'll put out 19, if I can. I'm just going to make the attempt. If somebody says no, that's fine, but they might say yes.

MS. ANKER:

Could Bill look into this with the County to see if there is a way we can do this?

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

Who told you that this was parkland property?

DR. GITTELMAN:

To be honest with you, Lance told me that he spoke to someone, and it was secondhand information to me.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Lance Mallamo.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's a good 10 years ago. It was a long time ago.

LEGISLATOR LINDSAY:

I think it's a wonderful idea.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Good because we always felt it was a good idea.

MR. GISH:

Let me just proceed with it and see how far we can go with it. We can always say no at the end and so can the County, but let me just see where we can go now.

DR. PECORALE:

We can put it in the tower. We can hide it in the tower. There were a couple of logistical problems with it. One of them was that it had to have a hearing before the community. There was a display of unhappiness over it being here. That's one of them. I can't remember all of them. There was more than one problem with it. I do believe that that would be a real strong possibility. The technology has changed considerably from what it was ten years ago. The big thing was to hide it and to not have it –

DR. GITTELMAN:

At that time it came with an associated building that was about, if I remember, it was something like 40 feet by 15 feet by 10.

MR. GISH:

Let's just see what we have now and you can still say no later on, and the community can say no, where we may have to have that as a discussion but let's find out what the possibilities are.

MR. SWINSON:

Have you gotten any kind of a ballpark figure as to how much money we're talking about?

MR. GISH:

They wouldn't talk to me about a ballpark figure until they can assess whether they have a need in this area. I spoke to a fellow on the phone, and I'm sure he was low in seniority. He wanted to see from me where we were looking to put the tower and whether they think they need it. I think they need it just based on my communications. That was my only thought, that I can't make communications here. If we have 43 acres, I think there has got to be some place where this would be unobtrusive to neighbors and would be a plus for them. If it's not on their properties and far enough away from them, we might be able to generate – this is long-term. I don't know whether I'm going to get money short-term, but I'm trying to do it long-term if we can possibly get something annual to come in and it won't offend anybody. Maybe we could make it look like the Thatched Cottage or something.

MS. ANKER:

Excuse me. You can get hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for—

MR. GISH:

If Verizon and Sprint or anybody else wants to hook up to the same tower –

DR. PECORALE:

I think I have the old proposals.

MR. GISH:

Then you and I will talk more.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tom, did you want to say something?

MR. GLASCOCK:

I'm not an expert on cell towers, but I, in the past, have done some legal work for Glen Cove in our legal firm, and they had cell towers on water towers. They had cell towers on their garages. They were not obvious or intrusions of space or unsightly. They generate significant amounts of money from these. I know that companies approach churches because of their steeples. Without taking up space and creating an obstruction or anything unsightly, they put cell towers in churches. In fact, the Methodist Church on the way up here has a cell tower, I believe, in its steeple. There is enough opportunity for revenue.

MR. OLIVIERI:

That could kill two birds with one stone. We could put it up in our tower and take care of the structural problems it has.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The structural problems have been mitigated to some degree.

MS. ANKER:

There are obstacles with this because I did work a lot with the cell tower issue. Some reasons why I'm on my local school board is that they were going to put a cell tower on our football field. I have quite a bit of folders and all kinds of stuff on cell towers. But it's changed a lot.

I wanted to mention to Bill, too, Chandler Estate, you hardly get any cell reception in the Town of Mount Sinai mainly because it's a historical district. The churches tried to put them up, but because of the restrictions and also with Brookhaven Town, in certain situations you have to go in front of the Town Board if it's above a certain height. If it's not above that height, you don't have to. Any individual can get a cell tower in their yard, so long as you follow restrictions. It's something the County may want to look into as a source of revenue. I don't know what the rules are, but because the technology has changed, and I was on the complete other side of cell towers, mainly because I know a lot about the older technology. It's changed a lot since then. I'm more open to that.

Also the placement – so long as the placement is in its proper place, and so long as - - the other issue with the school is that they weren't getting enough money. They were going to get \$200,000 over a 30-year contract, and it wasn't enough money. That was just for Verizon. I think it's a very viable situation, not only for the Vanderbilt but maybe also for the County. I think that's a great idea. Again, there are obstacles, but I think they can be dealt with.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think this is a great conversation. But I do want to focus on one thing. We have a 45-day problem. We have a longer problem, and we have a 45-day problem.

MR. GISH:

I was just tagging on to that in dealing with the long-term problem.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Maybe I should call it the 45-day, \$45,000 problem. We have to come up with \$1,000 a day. How do we chip away at that? We have to start chipping away.

MR. DELUISE:

Steve, one of the things that Legislator Lindsay was very cooperative and really helping in support with the fundraiser was that we raised about \$18,000. If anyone else has an idea to do something else like that, two or three of those fundraisers could get us through the month and get us over the hump. I think that went really, really well. If there are opportunities to do things, if there are opportunities to look at a caterer who is going to give us some up-front money, if there is opportunity to look at some of this stuff with the gift shop or whatever else, we should work on those.

Legislator Cooper was very supportive and gave us a connection with a big national corporation. We were going to look at a grant. That's probably not going to happen for the next month or two, but we should be doing as many of those things as possible.

A few weeks ago, we had a little meeting on development. I'm looking for major gifts. Noel and Gretchen joined me, and I think Terry Pearsall was there, too. Terry is going to raise millions of dollars for us, too. But seriously, there are opportunities out there. The one thing that I think we have to do is what Carol is doing right now. She's looking at opportunities that we can move on. I think some of the things we need to do are not long-term. The long-term stuff we should be doing, but right now I think if anybody has an idea for something like what Bill Lindsay did, it was a great night. Two or three of those events like that could really make everything a lot better.

MS. ANKER:

What's going on with the catering facilities? Can a catering facility come in next week and start having events?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Not this one.

MS. ANKER:

Which one is that?

DR. GITTELMAN:

The one I mentioned to you that was willing to give us \$100,000 up front –

MS. ANKER:

Which one was that?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would prefer not to mention the name on the record if that's okay?

MR. DELUISE:

Sarah, what they're doing is coming up with proposals but there are companies that are willing to give us an upfront payment. So proposals are going through. For them to honestly look at putting weddings in now it would probably be the beginning of the summer of 2010. But if somebody is willing to make the investment, look at what they need to do for the kitchens or the delivery or the café, somebody has to believe in us.

MS. ANKER:

I just think that, again, you're saying we need money right now. I don't see why we can't just go ahead and try to get a contract with Verizon or go for things right now. The next meeting or the next week you might have a contract. Go for the catering facilities. Let's decide which catering facility we can get. Why is it taking so – how much time do we need to have to decide on which catering facility we can choose? We have a choice. I mean, there are other caterers that are out there.

DR. GITTELMAN:

This proposal is dated January 12, so we haven't sat on it too long. We're moving as quickly as we can to bring in these kinds of offers. I agree that we are in a very tough situation and maybe we should grab the first one that comes along and just make a deal, but that can bite you –

MS. ANKER:

Well, we're being bitten anyways. We're not even going to be a viable place, if you don't grab something soon and go with it and sign a short-term contract. Don't commit for a long time.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, no one is going to give us \$100,000 for a short-term contract.

MS. ANKER:

I'm just saying a year or two. Don't sign – how long is that contract for?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If they're going to make a substantial – the problem is that any caterer coming in here has to make a substantial investment. They want to know that they're not going to come and get everything working out and then we're out. We will have to –

MR. DELUISE:

It's standard that if for some reason we change our mission or bring somebody else in or whatever, usually that investment they're going to want back. That's all the stuff that you have to look at.

DR. GITTELMAN:

In other words, what they're saying is that they will give us an advance against their future site fees. That's what this is. They're going to invest money. We certainly have to sit down and talk with them, but, unfortunately, we've only had this for two days. We do want to move fast but –

MS. GISH:

Have we had any other offers that are similar to that?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, we have another one here.

MR. GISH:

Does that one also match that up on up-front money?

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, this one did not match the up front money.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, they didn't match it up front. They were talking 10 percent, and the other one is talking 15 percent.

DR. GITTELMAN:

This one the income stream was pretty much delayed until next year because they had to do up-front investment construction. In looking at the upfront – we are under so much pressure to get the money in the door that when somebody says they will give us a check for \$100,000, we have to consider it. This one, who knows. It may be a better long-term arrangement for us, but because we're not getting money up front—

MR. GISH:

I understand. There are two elements here, long-term and short-term.

MS. ANKER:

What's the extent of the \$100,000 caterer?

MR. GLASCOCK:

Does that have to be approved by the Legislature?

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's another thing. They are talking about modifying historic structures. That might require SEQRA review. I'm not trying to throw obstacles into it, but I'm just saying that there is a process. I don't know how much of a process we can throw aside. If we go ahead and say that we'll go through – they're talking about taking over the boathouse. The boathouse is scheduled for stabilization. I don't think we can give them the boathouse. Now we might be able to give them the garage, but the garage is a historic structure. Can we move catering services in there? I get the feeling the County will be very cooperative with us, and we can move very quickly, but typically, just so you understand, if we were doing this under a normal climate, I would say to you that we're not going to have approval for a year because it does take a long time.

MR. DELUISE:

Can't we call in that Oversight Committee to help us to this?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm not clear what the Oversight -- we have to find out what the Oversight Committee does, but I wish they were here right now so that they could hear us, talk with us, so that they could help facilitate this and we can get it done. We can't do better than having the Presiding Officer here. This is a good night for us.

MS. ANKER:

I don't see a –

DR. GITTELMAN:

There is nothing. In other words, this is the first step in a negotiation. What we're giving is an opportunity to negotiate, and they have thrown out a pretty decent piece of bait, \$100,000. We know who they are. They're down the road. We want to negotiate with them. Can I have it done in a week? I kind of doubt it, to be honest. Check in hand – no. But we're moving along with this.

MS. ANKER:

But that's one of the main things as far as giving them a call and find out, you know, what were they thinking about? How long do they have to commit. If we're going to jump on this next week or in two weeks because we have 45 days to – you're asking for money right now. Find out if it's a year lease. Is it a five-year lease? Is it a ten-year lease? I don't know. That's what I meant as far as a shorter lease may be better until we understand where we're at.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Let me just give you a – I'm just going to try to explain something. I will read you one paragraph so you get a sense for this. We will be glad to have you all review it. It says, "Additional tents for other areas in the rose garden, courtyard, marine museum, south side of the planetarium for children's parties, educational fieldtrips, these tents will further -- " In other words, they want to have run of the place. Yes, we can do it. We can go ahead and give them run of the place. But usually to run the place takes a little bit longer than a week. It will take a little time to get this narrowed down.

MR. GLASCOCK:

I don't mean to throw out obstacles, but you mentioned SEQRA, and you also mentioned the Oversight Committee, I think that should be used as a tool and a resource because there are a lot of questions that are going to come up. For instance, again, you mentioned SEQRA, because this is a County facility. Do we have to go through an RFP process before we select a caterer?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I don't think in these circumstances we do. I feel like we're in London in the Blitzkrieg so maybe we don't have time for some of this stuff.

MS. ANKER:

Well, how would you find out?

MR. GLASCOCK:

The County Attorney's Office, I think, is a good place to start.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We're a County organization and a not-for-profit. Only over a certain dollar value can you –

MR. OLIVIERI:

Do you know the thing with the restaurant, though, that's part of what we always had a plan on going back eight or ten years with the waterfront, to develop it. It's a major part of the future business plan at this place, and it's not something where you just want to go, "Oh, I got \$100,000. We'll go for it. We're desperate." There's no way you're going to get a facility, even with a big check up front, that's going to make sense, that's going to keep us sustained for six months or a year. What we should be looking at – I didn't want to say it, but I have been talking to the bankers, the Washington Mutual people, the Chase people. They have millions of branches all over. They will let us put, "Save the Museum" baskets out or whatever we have to do.

The other thing is that we have all the schools come in here all the time. Why don't we pick up the phone and talk to every single one of these schools and say, "Listen, you've got to throw a little party or something. Have the kids put in 50 cents or \$1 each, whatever it is, all across this Island, whoever comes in here to raise some money for this \$45,000." That's something that's quick. It can be done. The bank will help. We could get them in here and do what they can.

The restaurant is more serious. It's got to be planned out. It's not something you want to do with a knee-jerk reaction. If we screw that up, we're screwing ourselves up in two or three years where it could be really good substantial money. Let's not be foolish. Let's plan it out.

MS. ANKER:

How long do you think we should take to look into the catering?

MR. OLIVIERI:

Whatever it takes to do the job right. If you don't do it right, then you're going to have nothing but nightmares.

MS. ANKER:

We have a nightmare right now.

MR. OLIVIERI:

That's okay, Sarah. I just put together two other ideas other than the restaurant. What do you have to say? What is your proposal?

MS. ANKER:

I think we should go as soon as possible to the cell tower idea. We should try to lock in a contract. A catering facility also, we should try to lock into a contract. That's how I feel. We're spinning our wheels, and we're not going anywhere. Until we get money coming in next week – Steve is saying that we need more tomorrow. We need money the following day.

MR. OLIVIERI:

I can guarantee you that cell tower will not happen for six months, no matter if you have Verizon, Sprint or anybody else down there.

MR. GISH:

I'm just not abandoning the long-term things.

MR. OLIVIERI:

I'm not saying not to do it, but don't just sit there, just because there is \$100,000 that's being presented, to really go through and look at what we're doing here because do you know something? Easy money sometimes is not worth it. That \$100,000 may not be there.

MR. DELUISE:

Do you agree that we should do what's right, take as much time as we need but move as quickly as we can and we should be doing all of these? We should be looking at the banks and looking at whatever we can do to make this happen.

One of the things that I feel very strongly about is that you all parked your car by the guard booth. I think that this facility should be a little bit more customer-friendly, that we don't have a café. There is no place to sit down except to get something out of the vending machine. You need those things. There are no benches. If you walk up here or you're walking through the cobblestones, and you need a place to sit down, any zoo, museum, library, there is a place to sit down. These are the things that we need to do.

The economy not only for the Vanderbilt Museum, but the rest of the businesses and the non-profits in this country have to right now reinvent themselves, start over again. If the Vanderbilts today gave us this wonderful facility and said, "This is yours," and we were business people, we would look at the place and say, "What do we have to do to make it work?" I think right now what we need to do is to make it work and we do everything we can.

MR. OLIVIERI:

I never said not to do those things, Mike. I'm just saying, don't just rush in willy/nilly and sign a contract.

MS. ANKER:

I didn't say rush in willy/nilly. I'm saying that we need to do something as soon as possible. I think six months is too late. I think we need to do something in the next month or two.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I have to get control of this meeting.

MR. GISH:

I'd like to make a recommendation. I will head a committee of anyone on the Board who would like to examine as carefully as possible the recommendations that we have coming in for catering and to make a recommendation to the Board as quickly as possible. If there is anybody else on the Board who would like to work with me on that, please let me know.

MR. OLIVIERI:

At the last meeting, we had Art Sillman say that. The contracts didn't come in. They weren't sent to him.

DR. GITTELMAN:

They only arrived two days ago.

MR. OLIVIERI:

But we already talked about this at the last meeting.

MR. GISH:

Okay, if Art was here and was running with that, then I will be on his committee.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, Art volunteered.

MR. GISH:

Then I will go with Art.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Art has expertise in this area.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're not looking to step on Art's toes.

MR. GISH:

I will give Art a call or an email and tell him that we're going to move on it and get a meeting together.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, I'm going to drag you back and focus you. We have 45 days, \$45,000. I'm not knocking any of the proposals on the table. How do we chip away at the \$45,000? I want to hear things that deal with 45 days. Bill.

DR. ROGERS:

Someone made a suggestion about putting boxes in the schools and getting the children to make donations with nickels, dimes, or dollars. That's something that could happen quickly if we would take the stand of getting these boxes – and even getting the banks to put these boxes in. You may be able to generate and collect some money. It may not be \$45,000. It may be \$3,000 or \$4,000. It's a start.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I'm glad we are working with the Friends. I think by Monday I will have the letter ready where it's going to be called the Paper Star Campaign. We have the graphics all done. We have stars like in the sky as well as sea stars that actually Jon Cooper's office is going to facilitate the printing and the die cutting of these paper stars. Then we'll be able to contact banks and schools and ask for their participation in this program. Then with the volunteer help, either mail or deliver the stars. You donate a dollar or \$5, depending on the color. You write your name and you can post it, as well as posters or whatever for the displays. That is something within the next week. The more help we have with the distribution and then the follow-up, the better. A bank reaches across the Island. That is absolutely golden. We are moving it. It's the Paper Star Campaign.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

How many people did we have that came that week that anyone could come for free?

MR. GISH:
Arrow Week.

DR. GITTELMAN:
We had some 1,500 or 1,600 a day.

DR. PECORALE:
I just bring that up because, and I said this all along, that one of the things we have to do is we have to get teachers' unions because the teachers' unions will actually do our publicity for us. This museum is tied to an educational plan with the State Educational Department. It's there. For some reason or another, we just can't seem to make the connections that we need to make with the union. The teachers' union is our major entrée into getting kids and parents into this museum on a regular basis. I came to this museum when I first became a teacher. That's how I got involved in this museum. That was a long, long time ago. For some reason, we just haven't been able to do that. Every teacher in the State gets a newspaper, every single one from the New York State United Teachers, NYSUT. I put you in touch with somebody who is on the Executive Board, and I think that that's got to be your immediate entrée. I think that the Huntington Teachers Union could be talking about sponsoring a day or a weekend or a couple of days here and put money in the coffers for us.

DR. GITTELMAN:
What we really need, if I can say this, I'm going to tell you right now. You can't call Carol. Her voicemail is full. She can't keep up with the calls that are coming to her. We don't need shoulds. We need people who will do.

DR. PECORALE:
I can't do it. The reason I can't do it is because we're talking about my son.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:
And I did speak with him, and we're going to have a day – he wanted to sponsor an open house here. Well, he didn't want to, but we're talking about sponsoring an open house through his contacts at the museum. We have an E&E meeting tomorrow. We're just looking at setting up a date either the end of March or the end of April. We are moving on that.

DR. GITTELMAN:
Okay, 45 days.

MS. ANKER:
Tell me a little bit more about the Paper Star Project. Has that already started and the County is coming up with stars right now? I'm involved in quite a few school districts.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:
No, the County wouldn't be doing the stars. We have the designs for the stars. I have talked to Lora Gellerstein of the Friends Group. She was going to help us. I'm meeting with her next week. We should have the inquiries being sent out next week. I will get her the files for the stars. We hope to start the campaign so that it's running during our February break week, so that we could also do that here.

MS. ANKER:

Where are the letters going to?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

To banks, to restaurants, to businesses, to the schools. Again, it's a very labor-intensive kind of project, which is why the Friends Group is critical to being able to push that forward.

MS. ANKER:

If you can, think of a way or, you know, if we could think of a way to inspire the kids – in other words, how much per star? What is the amount?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We were going to do a dollar and then \$5 for a different color. My focus has been on the business plan and things, but as of the weekend—

MS. ANKER:

Well, it seems like the Friends can take some pressure off of you and do some of the labor work.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We need the volunteers. But, again, that has a lot of potential for payoff. If we can get banks to handle the communication to branches—

MR. OLIVIERI:

Not only that, I want them to whatever that pattern is to either throw out a few bucks for that or have some of the tellers and people that work there do some of the work. It doesn't take long.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That could be great. When I did this locally in Smithtown all the banks in the community were great. We have to reach -- what we are trying to emphasize, and I think the fundraiser, the cocktail party that Bill Lindsay held, we're not just Huntington. We are not a little local community. We are all of Suffolk County. We are all of Long Island. We will be reaching out with our stars. We have a lot of communication with schools through Queens, as well. We have those lists that we will be sending out. It's a perfect project for Friends. That will be going for six weeks, the end of January; six weeks will probably end the middle of March.

MR. GISH:

You should mention that some of the banks in Smithtown agreed to match what the donations came in at. I don't know whether your contacts would be willing to do that –

MR. OLIVIERI:

It's Wa-Mu. They have a lot of branches but money, I don't know.

MR. GISH:

But they can always say no, but if you ask them, they may come through.

MS. ANKER:

Even for the district.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Bill.

DR. ROGERS:

You keep mentioning that we have 45 days, and that we need \$45,000. I don't think you're going to get it. It's going to depend upon different programs to get started to making contributions. I will start a fund now. I will put \$100 toward that money that you need and see if we could get everybody else outside of Friends to get \$25, \$50, whatever it is, tell them what reason we have to raise the money and see if we could get cash coming in, as much as you can. I think it's a live active program. I will start it off with \$100.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Good. Thank you.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

You could add that to this \$150 check I have.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's wonderful. I hope I'm just two days away from having the button on our website to donate. If you go to NYCHARITIES.ORG, we are listed with them now. You can donate on-line.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Speaking of on-line, can you register us with E-Bay?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I will register us on E-Bay.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Again, secretly go ahead and put your old pajamas on E-Bay and sell them, but you could sell them right to this charity. And then you don't have to pay the same fee to register.

MR. OLIVIERI:

How many more cars do you have?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I will come over with something to put on E-Bay. You never know. It may be easier to part with the old car than you might think, so maybe you will get a grand or two for that, and it will go right to the museum. The check that went for my car went straight to the museum.

DR. ROGERS:

Steve, I have a Hydro-port.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, let's put it on E-Bay. Get photographs and –

MR. SWINSON:

A what?

DR. ROGERS:

A Hydro-port. It's what a 15 or 18 foot boat can sit on. It keeps it out of the water.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Why don't you give us the boat?

MS. ANKER:

When did you say that everything will be ready for that Paper Star Project?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We should be ready by the end of next week to send out the inquiries. I have to make sure I have my volunteers in place to actually deliver them, but I'm hoping by the end of January will be the start date. It should be a four-to-six week program.

MS. ANKER:

I'll be attending a LISPR meeting, the Long Island School Public Relations, and that pretty much consists of all the public relation directors from Suffolk County. So if you have anything –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

When is that?

MS. ANKER:

It's the Wednesday coming up. I could mention it.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I will try to get you something on Tuesday.

Just to get us back on the Treasurer's Report, just to explain again what you have in your packets, we don't have the actual numbers for December yet. We do have the actuals for November, which if it wasn't for the fact that we didn't get the \$100,000 distribution, it would have shown as a positive month. It looks like we will end, in talking to Barbara, our bookkeeper, that we will end in the black, we think. We did get in December a distribution, more than we had anticipated. This will change a little bit.

I also included, especially because we have some new Trustees, the Treasurer's Report going back to 2000 so you can get a little bit of a historic –

MR. SWINSON:

Sorry to interrupt, but I know we spoke about this at one of the other meetings, but, Steve, is there a letter we have in which we can send to potential contributors of the museum?

DR. GITTELMAN:

It was a form letter.

MR. SWINSON:

Did you send it out?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think I sent out something regarding donations, goods, or money. A request letter?

MR. SWINSON:

Yes, a request letter to ask for contributions or donations to the museum.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Sure.

MS. ANKER:

I'll take one of those, too.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Sure, we'll get those out. Again, my attention has really been focused on business plans, but I would like to do an annual appeal. Actually February is not a bad time to do an annual appeal because people start thinking about their tax write-offs.

MR. GLASCOCK:

When I came here with my kids during the free week, you had materials all over this lobby area in terms of Friends and donating money. Are those things routinely given out? When people buy tickets, are those handed out?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, we have an information desk the first thing, and we have a lot of that. Particularly now our staff is engaging in a lot of conversation with that in mind, so we do have a lot of that out there. Hopefully, again, with February break we will have a lot of traffic going through to try to capitalize on this situation. We didn't have enough staff help that Arrow Week to do a lot of the membership drives we would have liked to have done and some of the other kinds of things, just because we were stretched to the max. Unfortunately, our Friends, for the most part right now, are mothers with young children, and it's a bad time to expect them to volunteer, although we had a little bit of help. We do hope to get things more in place.

MS. ANKER:

Instead of the letter, maybe if we had something that said, "Save the Museum," a packet or something like that. This way I could give it to the people that are interested that maybe –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We'll try to get something like that out there. As I said before, I've been working on the business plan.

You do also have in your packets and what has been distributed, it's the narrative part. It's sort of a vision. I think it reflects my philosophy and views on where we need to go and certainly deals with a lot of what we have been talking about tonight. The numbers part of that will be coming. That's what I'm working on. That is what is so difficult to project, especially as we talk about partnerships with catering halls and retail stores. I have been talking a lot to different people. We have a lot of different things out there. I do have some projections. I have a nice solid projection for 2009. If we get an \$800,000 helping-out package, I'm confident that we can do very well this year.

The year 2010, however, with our new planetarium coming in, we will be closed for a period of time. So even though I think we expect a huge increase in our admissions and everything we do here, I don't think that we'll be able to turn things around by 2010.

By the time we get to 2011, however, I can see a light at the end of the tunnel. But getting through this year, we need \$800,000. Next year we're probably going to need \$800,000 to be generated. I'm still working with the numbers. It's not maybe the numbers that a lot of people wanted to see, but that's what's holding the numbers part back a little bit.

Again, if we get something solid with a caterer, I have met with a retail company that is very excited about coming in. They had a lot of good ideas, but for this year, I don't see that as really generating a lot of money because they have to make an investment. If they have to make a \$30,000 investment, it's going to be a while before we see the 10 or 15 percent or whatever we decided to do there. It might save us some cost, but we're looking at these things. If I know the catering part, we have a committee, which is going to be charged with looking at the two proposals and anyone else that might be coming in, that we could move as quickly as possible. The retail store I don't have a firm proposal. I expect it probably by tomorrow or in a few days.

MR. GISH:

A proposal from them?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, from them. There is a lot about this particular store that is very, very attractive. I don't know if you want to get into all of that right now. To make an agreement with them, is that another Board Committee? How do we want to handle the store? They would love to come in and be here February break week and take advantage of that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I don't want to commit for Art, but he seems like the right guy to look at this.

MR. OLIVIERI:

He would be more than happy to look at it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Would you work with him on that?

MR. OLIVIERI:

Absolutely.

MS. ANKER:

What are they going to do? What's their purpose?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

They are a toy store, educational toy store in Connecticut that was looking for another venue. We would like to do a lot of on-line things. They're a hugely nice fit for us, even the name, which is just perfect for us. They would look at naming the store here, their name, and putting it on here. I think it could be much more profitable for us. Again, for us right now we're not capitalizing on this space the way

we should, just because we don't have the money to invest and the staff. So if we have someone else coming in who can make that \$50,000 investment, then maybe we will be able to grow.

MS. ANKER:

Can you tell me what the proposal is? Has he submitted a proposal?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Not a written one. They have been here, the partner and the manager, twice from Connecticut. They are very excited about the potential deal.

MS. ANKER:

Then if the store goes in, they could start producing them right away, or are you saying they –

DR. GITTELMAN:

They would be investing, and then we would get a payback later on. But it would be probably close to a one-year –

MS. ANKER:

One year?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Those are the terms as they proposed them.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Although they are talking about paying the staff that would work in there and also admissions, so it would take off from our expense side. We don't really make that much money here. You have to look at the big picture for that, too.

Anyone who calls or has an idea, as time permits I'm going down – again, time is limited but –

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm just going to throw something out there. Does anybody know a nursery that might be willing to buy nursery stock for this spring now?

DR. PECORALE:

Do you mean to put the nursery program here –

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, that might be willing to be nursery stock. I will donate trees. I have acres of trees. Does anybody know a nursery? Does anybody know Jimmy Bissett?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

No, but I know somebody that works there.

DR. GITTELMAN:

If Jimmy Bissett would buy the trees I've got in the ground, all the proceeds could come here. I have over 1,000 trees.

DR. PECORALE:

That's a lot of trees. I've been there.

MS. ANKER:

What kind of trees?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Cedar – well, you've seen two of them that are here, the two Christmas trees. I've got close to 1,000 trees. I have Dogwoods. If they'll come in, pay now for the spring, they can come and dig them in the spring. We will hold them, and they can take them right now. They can write the check right here. That would be enough to cover the whole thing.

MR. GISH:

So you are looking for a contact with a nursery where they can come in and look –

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, if you know Jimmy Bissett well enough, you contact him or anyone who owns a nursery, let them come to my place, tag it, let them write a check for here, and they can come dig them up in the spring. They could get a charitable deduction plus they get the trees, and they're good trees.

MR. GISH:

I'll look for a nursery in my area, Smithtown. I'll see if that idea works.

MS. ANKER:

Have you tried Bissett?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I was just sitting here thinking. It just occurred to me. I better watch out. I'll lose another car. But I do have hundreds and hundreds of trees that I grew from little ones, all kinds of trees. If I could sell 100 trees, that could be \$5,000 or \$10,000 right there.

MR. OLIVIERI:

We could talk about some of these ideas and stuff, but we need a plan B, which is if this money doesn't start coming in, we're going to have to make the cuts. You heard what Legislator Lindsay said. We're looking 50 percent off of that payroll and some of the stuff with the security. We have to start thinking about that, too, as a back-up plan.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Number one, if we're going to start talking about personnel cuts, we have to do that in executive session.

MR. OLIVIERI:

You can ignore this part of what's going on. With security, how bad is that gardener's house? Is that thing fit to live in still or has that deteriorated?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The cottage? It's rough. It's livable but it's rough.

MS. ANKER:

How much for rent would that get a month?

MR. OLIVIERI:

I wasn't thinking about renting it, but if you get a couple of Suffolk County cops who are looking for a place to live, whether they're going through divorces or they just want to find a place to live and they trade off their time to do a little security around here, that could save some money in security.

DR. GITTELMAN:

In the past that cottage was used as the Director's cottage. One of the advantages of using it as the Director's cottage was that it gave an on-premises presence 24 hours a day. It does have a secondary impact on security.

DR. PECORALE:

We also had it where it wasn't just the Director living there. There was a young man who lived on the property, too, for a couple of years.

MR. GITTELMAN:

We had at times used it that way. But I'm going to say if you're going to turn over the garage to be used as a catering facility, then you might want to use the Director's cottage. It can be used for ancillary classroom facilities. If you have to do that, it could be done. We have done it.

MS. ANKER:

Where is the garage?

DR. GITTELMAN:

When you go right down there it's the one on the way to the –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

By the Marine Museum.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Michael.

MR. DELUISE:

At the last meeting you raised the admission fee from \$3 to \$5. That was real money that is coming in. If only five people came in, there are a few dollars more coming in. I think today, I think what Bill said and I think what Steve and Carol are telling us, if we don't do something soon – if there are ideas that you have that you want to move on, I think we have to move on them really quickly because we don't have enough money right now to get through February. If we don't, then comes along March and April, and it won't matter anymore.

I have talked to a number of the Legislators. I think you have talked to the County Executive's Office. They want this place to start taking action if we're going to start bringing in revenue. I feel personally that if Carol wants to make a suggestion on a caterer or a gift shop or coming up with a promotion with the Friends, she should make the recommendation and then in committee here the Trustees should say, "Yes, let's do it," or "Let's not do it." Otherwise we're going to be – we have sat through these meetings for a number of months and we talk about great ideas. Everybody has a great idea, but if somebody wants to take it and make it happen, let's do it. Otherwise we're not going to have any more of these meetings.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I have no problem with giving Art Sillman and Dan Olivieri the authority, with the Director, to make a decision on both of those items out of the hat without even talking to us. Does anyone have a problem with that?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I definitely have a problem with that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, there you go.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I understand that Art is an authority on it, but I would want to see that particular proposal that they recommend to us with my own eyes before it's finalized.

DR. PECORALE:

I have a suggestion for you. Actually I don't know how this happened because originally the vending machines were supposed to have on it a place for a credit card. The original vending machine proposal said they were going to have the ability for a person to use a credit card. Let me tell you the difference between the revenue for a vending machine where you have to put in coins and dollar bills versus a credit card. It's 40 to 60 percent greater. If somebody doesn't have enough change or they don't have a dollar bill, they can take out that credit card, put it in, pull it out, and they can buy whatever.

MS. ANKER:

I haven't seen them. They're out?

DR. PECORALE:

Yes, they're all over the place. If you go to the Connetquot School District or the Longwood School District, they are all over the place there.

MS. ANKER:

Ask the vendors if we could get them.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We do have our store open most of the time so that if people do need change, we have it.

DR. PECORALE:

Those are old vending machines. They're not new ones. Ask them if they will change them for ones that have a credit card, and then keep track of your revenue between the two kinds. I'm telling you that it makes a difference.

MR. GISH:

If you don't have time, Carol, I'll call them.

MS. ANKER:

So it looks like we have three solid issues that are going to help you within the next couple of weeks or so. Maybe we could get an update. The cell tower, the catering facility and the campaign, the fundraising campaign.

MR. GISH:

I think the campaign is going to kick off quicker.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If I get the help, we can get things moving quicker.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We haven't touched Development yet. We haven't gotten to that part yet.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, Finance has been a big issue.

DR. PECORALE:

Who is doing the cell tower?

DR. GITTELMAN:

What do you mean?

DR. PECORALE:

With trying to get a company to come in and put the cell tower –

DR. GITTELMAN:

Noel is.

DR. PECORALE:

I do have one connection that you might be able to use.

MR. GISH:

One question, and Bill left but I already emailed the question into the County of the legality of being able to do that on our own without any-

DR. GITTELMAN:

As soon as we have a proposal, we can run it right to Bill.

MR. GISH:

Okay, then I will work on it and see what they have.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Noel, get a contract, Steve will sign it, and whatever happens happens.

MR. GISH:

No, my proposal was to bring it before the Board, but I wanted to eliminate a lot of legwork for you guys by just having one person do it. I will do it, and then you guys can review it. I'm not a lawyer. I will let everybody take a peek at it first and then we can make a decision.

MR. OLIVIERI:

They don't have a lot of wiggle room with those things, they really don't, from Verizon. They just kind of give it to you, just how much you're to extract from them.

MS. ANKER:

They just want you to sign. They put pressure on you to sign. About 300 people turned up and said we do not want a cell tower on the football field. The school

board backed down and didn't sign. But all Verizon needed was that signature. They didn't get it. The deal fell through. Just beware.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, we can move on to the Development Committee and just continue the same discussion.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Basically three-quarters of Development has been covered. There are just a couple of other things to go over that I want the Board to know about. A couple of weeks ago I contacted Public Affairs of the Long Island Rail Road. They directed me to the New York Station Master of Penn Station, as far as getting a kiosk installed in Penn Station. It will be a live kiosk. It would actually have to be manned by people. I faxed over the application to Carol. Hopefully you can get that back to me, and I will deliver that personally. We can get those permits within the next two weeks. As soon as you get it back to me, it will be the next day after that. I have been assured we will get the permits and we will be able to get some people there right away to hand out information. If we get the button on the website soon, you could tell people to go through the website.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I have been delaying a little bit on the annual appeal. I put the request into our website. I'm hoping tomorrow it will be up there. I will let you all know as soon as it's on our home page.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We were hoping that we could use the Friends of the Vanderbilt to maybe volunteer some time there at Penn Station and have a presence.

Additionally, we are working with their Public Affairs Department on setting up a package deal where you come from Penn Station on the train to Greenlawn and then you will have to work out – that's obviously forward looking. That's not going to happen in the next 30 days. This other item might be a good way to tap into the New York City people getting out to Long Island. We will work on that.

Another idea for instant revenue would be, and I'm sure somebody on this Board has it, I had it five years ago, but the Long Island Association. We have their email list.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We're members.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We will set up an email blast to these companies, the corporate companies. Get it out there and ask them to help us out, that we need their help right now. I don't care if it's \$100 or \$50 or \$1,000. Also offer them a discount on their future events here.

DR. PECORALE:

Do you want Sagtikos Manor's mailing list?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Any mailing list that anyone can give me would be great.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I don't know if that's proper.

DR. PECORALE:

I can give it to you because my wife is the secretary.

MS. ANKER:

Would this be something Friends would work on? In other words, to take away some of this work, because, again, we have the Star Campaign. We have a corporate campaign. For me, I've done fundraising. I have done campaigns. There needs to be a letter to go to the corporations. There needs to be a mailing list. They need to be mailed out. Is this something that maybe Lora and the Friends could help you work on? Again, I'm sure we could get –

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Generally, that's something that the Development Department would do, but we don't have a Development Department.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

What I am going to look to do is to do the writing and work with volunteers in delivering, to doing the folding, and to doing the leg work.

MS. ANKER:

I have some corporate sponsors that would be interested, but again I need that letter. That's why I'm thinking maybe I could just take some of these "Save the Museum," packets, but if we could have a professional –

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I have some letters that I created for some of our galas. We could maybe adjust them.

MS. ANKER:

You could put them on letterhead and proof them.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We will get the annual appeal letter, and then we can use that to put this out.

MS. ANKER:

But focus on corporate – in other words, not too much residential but corporate sponsorships. It might be on the website under corporate sponsors. We need people that are willing to contribute \$10,000, \$100,000.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If anyone has contacts with people that you believe might be willing to donate at that level, that's not going to be a form letter. I will call them. I will visit them. That's a personal contact.

MS. ANKER:

Here's another idea, too. Another way to get large amounts of money quickly is naming something after them. Somebody mentioned the bell tower, to rename it.

We talked about smaller amounts for seats, donating for seats. But off the top of your head, someone mentioned Minolta. Which company was it in Melville –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Canon is coming in. We talked about naming opportunities. We are trying to put that together. From the planetarium, to the lobby, to an exhibit case, to a classroom, to a staff position, that's something that we have been talking about.

MS. ANKER:

Could that be part of the corporate letter? In other words, the Chairman and CEO's are going to sit down and read the letter and say, "Why do I want to contribute?" Give them some information on the corporate letters. We need that as part of this.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

That's a good long-term goal. Right now I figured we'd get the LIA's mailing list. I'll even put together something and I can do an email blast.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Again, just like with Bill Lindsay's event, we had our gala here two months before that. It was his list, his making the phone calls that made the difference. It's not just sending out the letters. If you know someone who has the ability to personally make those kinds of phone calls and contacts, that's what it's about. It's the same thing with getting these large corporate donations. We have in the past cold called, but letters are going to end up on the bottom of a pile someplace, but if any of you have any kind of personal –

MR. D'ORAZIO:

That's why an email blast doesn't waste any time or money.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about what we're –

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I understand we're talking about long-term relationships, but what I'm talking about is, "Save the Vanderbilt right now and send us \$100." They will do that without even thinking. You're not going to get them to give you \$10,000 without seeing them or meeting them.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's why if someone has those contacts, that's what we're going to be up for any time day or night. We're here. We're ready to go. If you have a function that you think might be good for me to attend, I'm there. That's part of what I'm doing as well. We're going to go \$1 or \$5 at a time broadly; \$100 we have the blasting capabilities here now. If you have ideas such as LIA, HIA, whatever other chambers you might belong to, Melville Chamber would be a good \$25 ask. Then if someone has ideas on the big asks or the naming opportunities, that we do have naming opportunities.

MS. ANKER:

What's MILBA?

MR. DELUISE:

Long Island Mid Suffolk Business Association –

MS. ANKER:

I know the President, but he's a board member for Longwood. I'm wondering if we could get these organizations like LIA and LIMBA and some of these other large business organizations to meet here. We could try to bring them in and then go after the money at that point. Would you like me to go in and talk to them? Do you know the LIA people?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We are members.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

It's a 5,000 company list.

MS. ANKER:

Then we need a place again –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

This is it right now for a function during the winter. This is our biggest space. We can fit 125 people.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Carol, we have some donations for you. I just want to mention that one of the Board Members who lives here in Huntington, a member of the Red Cross, Suffolk County Red Cross, heard me talking to another Board Member about our financial situation. She is retired. She just pulled out her checkbook and wrote a check for the museum, not large but it's significant enough that it really touched me. She said, "I heard that you guys need money. Here, this is for them." There are people out there willing to help.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

And we have been getting \$25 checks, \$100 checks. We got another \$1,000 check. Some corporate level called with a \$2,500 check. Someone called who was here with his child and had a great time. He is going to be a corporate sponsor at \$2,500 level. We are getting some of those, but again we need to come up with \$45,000. If we don't get this money approved by the Legislature, we maybe could just not pay bills. Is Barbara here? Just to get down to it. We need \$45,000 to be able to keep up with our bills and get through two payrolls, right, for February.

MS. OSTER:

Until the end of February.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If we don't pay any bills, do you think we can make the two payrolls?

MS. OSTER:

Yes, that's based on the revenue that was projected. If for some reason we get bad weather, that could drop that revenue down and then we'll need more money.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But the question was, if you don't make any payable payments, can you make -- given the current cash situation and what would be a conservative projection -- will you make payroll?

MS. OSTER:

I think so. I'm pretty confident about that. We consider payroll first before anything else.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You have to, by law.

MS. OSTER:

Hopefully we don't have any big snow.

MS. ANKER:

I was in touch with Danielle Campbell. She's from News 12. She was at Longwood doing a school segment. I mentioned the Vanderbilt to her, and she suggested possibly a mini documentary on the Vanderbilt.

MR. GLASCOCK:

I personally know her. She lives in my neighborhood. She's very into the community. She's a Huntington resident. She lives over in Huntington Station. She is very much into kind of people stories and things like that. I had reached out to her as part of the Chamber to moderate a debate on the Broadwater issue. She was willing to do that, so I think she might be interested in this.

MS. ANKER:

She doesn't like politics. She won't touch politics. She loves community interest stories.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have a lot of stories here. I think, again, for just getting through the next 45 days, if –

MS. ANKER:

But if she has a show next week, and we have the campaign kicking off, that could be it. That could pour in a lot of money right away.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

What I'm nervous about is if we continue to have weather like today, that costs us for sand, salt, overtime and the people don't come in. It just takes a few more bad days – we assume a few – say February break week, we assume we're going to lose two days, but if we lose four days and we lose some other days, then we don't make that second payroll. We are on the edge.

MS. ANKER:

So my suggestion would be, and again, this is a campaign basically supporting what you're going to be starting next week with the Friends, is have News 12 – when you guys are set and when that button on the website is ready to go and you have the paper stars cut out, and that will be about two weeks, find out the day that we can have a press event, and we will have Danielle Campbell come. I can stir up some media if you need that. Maybe we could then have a kick-off campaign. I say within a couple of weeks, I think you're going to get \$10,000 or \$20,000 just from that. You just need a kickoff. Then have Danielle come back and follow up with a mini-documentary or A&E. I would use News 12, though because she's extremely supportive, and it's very local news.

MR. GISH:

Any positive publicity, long-term or short-term would be great.

MS. ANKER:

It could be a big campaign kickoff. I think that will be the shot in the arm we need.

DR. GITTELMAN:

See if she can happen to take some pictures of the trees. You're laughing, but I'm telling you there is \$40,000 or \$50,000 worth of trees there. Landscapers would just tag them, pay for them now, they could go to the museum, and they can collect the trees in the spring. It only takes five or six landscapers to knock off \$40,000 or \$50,000.

MS. ANKER:

Could you advertise that with a nursery? What is the farm association? What's his name? There is a huge nursery farm association.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But they are growers. You need the –

MR. GISH:

You might just need a retailer that's going to try to pass –

DR. GITTELMAN:

A retailer or wholesaler, and I keep mentioning Jimmy. I hope somebody can reach out to him.

Education Committee.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

As Carol said, the Education and Exhibits Committee does not meet until tomorrow, 2 p.m., at Normandy Manor. If anybody would like to come, you're all welcome.

What I have to report is from our December meeting. This time of year is always busy, but this year seemed exceptionally so. The holiday season kicked off with the annual tree lighting ceremony on December 7. It was a wonderful event. It was well attended, and it was well run. It was a special treat to be entertained by the talented Huntington High Steppers and the reading of an original poem written by Lora and read by Legislator Cooper.

The Master Gardeners and grounds crew readied the grounds for the holiday by setting up the two main Christmas trees and also placing around the grounds many small trees, all of which were donated by Steve Gittelman. They were sold by the Friends of the Vanderbilt. Garden Clubs from Centerport, Nathan Hall, Honey Hills, Dix Hills and Three Village added to the festive mood by helping to decorate the mansion.

These groups are some of the many volunteers who were honored with a dinner in the Planetarium on December 14. Noel was there representing the Trustees. Of course, Carol led the event. Fortunately, we have a huge volunteer base of between 70 and 80 people who benefit us in so many different ways.

The festivities continued with a party for the staff on December 19. We have an incredibly dedicated and resourceful staff. They are here for all of our events, whether it's the 6:30 seating of the progressive dinner or the holiday tree lighting at 5:00 p.m. on an icy cold night. I hope that they know that their efforts are much appreciated and that they are the best.

The grounds remained decorated during the very successful open house sponsored by Arrow Electronics during the last week of December. I'm sure you read about the record number of people who attended this event. Carol mentioned that it was between 1,500 and 1,600 a day. My husband and I were here helping on Saturday. We were amazed at the number and the diversity of the visitors. Many of them were here for the first time. People love this place – all kinds of people – children, teenagers, young adults and older adults. They were basking in the wonder of the Vanderbilt. They were amazed at what's here and curious about the whole legacy. It was delightful to experience the museum through their eyes.

And the festive atmosphere remained for Presiding Officer's December 28th cocktail party in the mansion, which was lovely and another very successful and much appreciated event.

It would be so helpful if more people were aware of the wonderful activities and programs that are ongoing here at the Vanderbilt. Staff has put together an email blast system called "Delivera." This will enable them to send out mass newsletters, invitations and reminders. Through these email blasts, groups can be notified of upcoming special events and can use these blasts to promote the education programs. Stephanie can alert people to new exhibits. Lorraine can use the blasts for the planetarium and the "Our Night Out" shows. Additionally, member and donator groups can be reached.

Happily the telescope is back, having been repaired. It seems to be working fine. Observing will take place on Friday nights with Saturdays soon being added to the schedule. Having the telescope operational is an added incentive for some people to come to our evening programs.

Carol has applied for the Bank of America grant, which allows underprivileged school children to experience the wonders of the Vanderbilt. This has been a huge benefit in the past.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

And we got the grant.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

Thank you. As you can see, vending machines, which contain healthy snacks and drinks, have been installed in the planetarium lobby, although they don't have the credit card facility. We will receive 25 percent of what's sold. It's also provided a much needed service.

As one way of addressing the economic crisis, various fees have been raised. I think we're all aware of these numbers. They have been reported in the media. It's hoped that they will increase revenues.

Rainbow Corporation, which is Bill Rogers, is funding the development of an audio tour and interpretation of the grounds by Antennae Audio. When it's completed, it will be a wonderful new service available to the public.

The next big event on the horizon is the February Break Fun Fest. Preparations are underway for what has become an extremely popular and highly successful yearly event. This year a magic show will be added with a 50/50 split of profits. A local artist illustrator will be at the "Our Night Out" shows on Wednesday and Sunday. There could be telescope nights that week. It is the International Year of Astronomy. That will be highlighted during the week. These February activities will not interfere with the spin cycling classes that will be ongoing as usual, and as you witnessed tonight.

I'll end with a big thank you to all of you who are working so hard to keep our education programs funded and available to the public. That's the end of the report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, thank you. Carol, your report.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Happy New Year, everybody. I want to thank all of you for a lot of hours that I know many of you have been putting in. It is an extraordinary time here. I'm trying to focus on the silver lining of all this publicity we have had and all the stress and the troubles. That is that more people than ever know about the Vanderbilt Museum. They are starting to learn about who we are, what we offer here, and they are starting to think about what life might be like if they didn't have the Vanderbilt to come to. That's a good thing.

The other silver lining is that I am working with so many different people in Suffolk County right now in the Budget Review Office, with Legislators and their Aides, with the County Executive and people in his finance office and elsewhere. So many people are really, I believe, trying to help. They might not all agree on the best route that they should take or how to get there from here, but the communication is there. The ideas are there. I really feel that we can get through this, and we will come out on the other side much better for it.

I have been working seven days a week day and night to try to do what I can. My staff is working huge hours. As you can imagine, it is stressful for them. But they are all hanging in there with us as well. If we can get through the next month, I do think that eventually we will get help this year, and we will be in a better position to really move toward sustainability.

I hope you take the time to read the narrative of the business plan to get a sense of where I think our focuses are going to have to be, and that we can all move forward. This is, again, at this point, just my draft. We will be meeting as Trustees and as Committees to refine this or maybe shift things a little bit, and we will be adding numbers to these projections, which are a little bit difficult. Hopefully we will be doing that within the next few weeks, and we'll have a better sense of what a difference catering might bring in or retail or some of these other partners.

The meeting on site here, again, it's not just me going out to Hauppauge or wherever. People are coming here. They are getting a better sense of the grounds and who we are. That is all a very positive thing. It's going to be an interesting next couple of months for sure.

DR. PECORALE:

Do you know Jim Morgo?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I've been getting to know him.

DR. PECORAL:

I strongly urge that we try to get him on this –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I believe he is –

DR. GITTELMAN:

He was going to come here yesterday.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I believe he might be on this Oversight Committee.

DR. PECORALE:

Jim Morgo is President of the Teachers' Union in my district. I know him well. Anything I can do to help with this. I have a very excellent relationship with him.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Wonderful. He is certainly part of this team that is helping us.

MS. ANKER:

Can I make a suggestion with the plan? I just got it yesterday, and I started looking through it but I'm looking at the goals. Again, I think that's the most important area to focus on. Again, there is so much here. It's overwhelming to everybody, especially to you, Carol. I was wondering if you would consider prioritizing these goals as far as the first one –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I will tell you right now, those are all priorities. Each one is a different area of focus for our museum. We can talk more about that, but those goals were pulled out of our strategic plan, which we have a committee that we will be getting going. There are objectives behind each goal. I'm not sure if you have the draft of that, but each of those goals has a whole long list of objectives. They cover different areas, institutional strength, the collections area, the education area, sustainability. We will need to talk about – the business plan is one thing. The business plan is just the business part of the museum. The strategic plan, that's critical, and we did have one meeting. We hope to have more meetings. That's the critical document. The business plan is just one part of the larger strategic plan.

MS. ANKER:

The reason why I bring this up is because we're in a really awkward situation. The goals are listed but number four is to achieve financial institutional stability and sustainability. At this point, that should be number one to me. That's our immediate focus right now. That's what I'm saying, as far as business. This is our business plan. With that idea is, where will we get the most money from? Where should we focus on right now? Again, we're focusing on a lot of things, and I think that might be draining our energy from focusing and going there and getting it done kind of thing. There is just so much here.

My concern is that we see more focus on the planetarium, on getting it going. But then again we're waiting for the projector. There are abstracts to overcome. Again, as far as the business plan and what we need to get – what's the most potent thing here that can bring in money?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If you read through the whole thing, you will see that certainly the planetarium is key, as well as some other areas. Everyone can look at the goals again, but obviously I'm spending most of my time dealing with financials right now. As an institution, the goal to attain the highest standard of research and stewardship and exhibits of collections, that is just as important. I'm not going to say how I spend my day; our priorities are all different. My focus has just been all about finances, but as an institution, those goals are just as important. That's the hard thing for a museum to remember, that you can't sacrifice your integrity, your mission, your goal to inspire a sense of wonder and discovery that's there.

MS. ANKER:

That's important, but if there's no money, there is no museum, and there is nothing to inspire. I'm not criticizing the fact that that's not a main – that is the purpose of the museum, what you just said. The business, and maybe I'm seeing it in two different aspects or abstracts, is that a business plan, that's what this is about. The goal of that plan is to create stability.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The goal of the institution is different – it still has to be carried over into the narrative part of the plan, and it must be consistent in all areas of the institutional documents.

DR. PECORALE:

Do you have Title 6 of the NYCRR? Do you know what it is? The NYCRR is the New York Commissioners Rules and Regulations. It says that this whole thing is to be tied to that.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Are you looking at the resolution?

DR. PECORALE:

Right. If you look at number seven it says that State Environmental Quality Review, etcetera, tied to Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations VI NYCRR is the New York Commissions Rules and Regulations. If you don't have it, I could get it for you. I would suggest that you read that because they are tying it in to that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, they're tying their Oversight Committee into it. They are just saying that it's a Type II Action.

MS. GLASCOCK:

It's a Type II Action under SEQRA. It's just a type of SEQRA process.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's more simplified. It's a short-form SEQRA. It doesn't have anything to do with our – this is them, not us.

DR. PECORALE:

I want to know specifically what they're talking about.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If you can get me any information, that would be fine. Like I said, the challenge here is to keep the goals of the institution and mission in mind while at the same time recognizing, for example, right now where my priorities are and how I spend my day. Clearly, I have been spending the last three months, and a large part of my time has been spent on looking at our finances, as well as a large part of the Trustees' time, unfortunately. But at the same time, we can never lose sight of why we're here and what our mission is. It all goes back to that.

MS. ANKER:

We are in a desperate situation as far as money.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Which is why all my time is spent about the money.

MR. GISH:

This is sort of like talking to students in class. I used to choose my words very carefully. I think as a museum we have to stay just that, number one. Otherwise if this gets out to -- let's say if you're going to go out and you're going to go to a corporate donor and our first priority is to raise money, they may say, "I thought you were a museum. I thought you were a planetarium."

MS. ANKER:

I took it the other way, though. If you took it to a corporate person, they are going to be focusing on stability.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We can continue that discussion as a sidebar, if we can. Anything else, Carol?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Just that we've got a lot of exciting days ahead. As I told my staff and all our new Board members, it's never boring. I'm glad you're up to the task.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, President's Report. We have a sequence of meetings with the County Executive's Office. We're not in favor -- I don't think anybody is in favor of this institution taking loans. I just need you to understand that this is not why we're meeting with them. We are not in favor of that process. We are meeting with them, number one, because if the County Executive asks you to come, you go. I just want you to understand that. If your Presiding Officer asks you to come, you go. That's it. I really don't have any compromise for that. I can't choose branches of government. We have to be at least open to suggestions from all sides. If they call us back, we will go again. They have been making intensive demands for us to give projections. Carol and I spent a lot of time talking about it. Carol does most of the work.

Projections are very difficult because there are a lot of unknowns. Projecting is always a magical process to some extent. I think there are projections that we have more confidence in than others. And there are projections where you have more knowns than unknowns. This is a time when we have so many unknowns that it makes the stability and predictability of a projection to be a little bit less palatable than normal.

One of the problems that we have is that the projections we're being asked to do are not the projections that – they're not the old projections that we would like to make. We can say we did this much last year, and we're going to do this much again this year or maybe we'll increase it by 10 percent. To make up \$1.2 million, you can't increase something by 10 percent. We have to make projections that meet the demand placed upon the institution to raise funds. It's a compromise between making projections that simply don't reach a goal that they need us to reach and being conservative and being confident we can reach it, so we are forced to some extent to project a little bit beyond what we're comfortable with. We are being asked to be ambitious. It's a very uncomfortable set of circumstances.

I just need you to understand that that's part of the conundrum. When you get an email from me saying, "We met with the County Executive on a loan," no, we don't know how we're going to pay back that loan. No, we don't want to borrow anything that we're not going to pay back, but, no, we're not going to turn down the discussion because it may be the only way out. If it's the only way out, and if it's the only door that opens, you have to go out.

The second thing is that I'm not sure how many terms I have served as President. I think this is my 18th term. I'm not sure about the number. I don't think it matters. This is extraordinary. I think that we have to reinvent ourselves. Michael said it and I agree with it. We have to reinvent ourselves to some great extent. Change is not comfortable for me because I have been here for so long, and I kind of like the museum the way it was.

We have to do new things, for example, the cell towers. And I'm glad you brought it up, Noel. I believe we dropped the ball on that. Now the things that before seemed impossible have become possible. I'm looking back saying that we let Cornell Cooperative take the boathouse. We should have made that the food service. I forget that we were told we could never make it into food service. But that's not the point. Somehow we should have made the whole thing happen back then because this state of urgency was coming. Sooner or later something was about to happen, and it did.

I'm telling you that this is a very scary time to be President of this institution. This is no sleigh ride. We've got to somehow make it to March. Then we have to take a deep breath when we make it to March and pray that something happens in March. Whatever you can do to make it happen now, make it happen now. You're all well intended people. You are all good Trustees and good people. If you weren't, you wouldn't be here. I'm saying to myself, why are these people here? This is tough service. They ought to hand out flack jackets and metal hats. You're brand new, and you were reading the papers, and you still showed up. The bottom line is that they are here, they're serious, and if they're serious, then they understand the problems. Let do something. I know I am repeating this over and over but just think of 45 days.

I am very pleased to be President, but I'm also scared to death. I have never said it that way before. That's how it feels. It's not easy. I'm going to ask for one thing, and I really mean this. No matter how miserable this gets, we have to be unified. We have to come together. We have to cross any bridges if they occur. We have to say, "Okay, fine. I don't like what you said. Maybe you were short with me. Maybe you weren't." We have to come together and say, "Okay, the enemy is not in here. It's out there. It's the economy. We're not going to beat that problem if we don't focus outward. If we focus inward, we're going to have trouble."

I will tell you that Carol is working way too hard. I mean that seriously, too hard. I don't think she can keep up this pace. I'm saying it in front of her, but I don't think she can keep up the pace. I can't keep up the pace. We're both struggling with time allocations. As I said, you can't call Carol because her phone is overflowing. She has filled up her voicemail.

One of the things we don't need, and I apologize for this because this is not intended, "You should have." There is no more room for that. Literally, in the County Executive's Office they said, "Well staff should take care of this." I said, "Turn around, Carol. Do you want to see the other half of staff? Just look at her back." She's only one person. That's it. We have staff, but when it comes down to it, there is no Development Officer. There is no Deputy Director. There is no infrastructure here for Carol. She can't even take a day off. I realize there are other staff members that are working very hard, but we are depending on Carol to do a lot of the things that we talk about here. It isn't going to happen, if that's what you think.

If we don't get this projection together, we're told we're dead when it comes to those votes. So, by golly, I'm telling you now she has to do the projections first. Whatever it takes to get those projections done, she's got to do that. They are heart-renderingly scary to do because we're scared of being at the other end of the year holding a bag where we said we could accomplish that we couldn't accomplish.

That's where we're at. Please if there is anything you can do, do it yourself as quickly as you can without expecting Carol to go ahead and carry the load. She can't. She is doing a great job. She is really a wonderful Director, but she just can't take anymore. She is working seven days a week. If you want to call me, call me, but I'll be honest with you, I'm a bit overloaded, too.

You're all here. You can all step up to the plate. You can all take leadership roles and all talk to each other. I trust you all. Make something happen. We just can't put it all on one person. If you come up with an idea and you want to bounce it off, call your colleagues. They are all good. They are all good at it. Come up with an idea. You're right. If we could make a decision on this tower between the two or three of you to get it going, let's do it. You have to have that confidence to go in there and as a group say, "This is what we recommended." If you want to give me the courtesy and send me a copy, I will stay up – I will show you the email trails. It starts at one in the morning. But for God's sake, answer my email requests, or I'm not staying up to write them.

The next meeting is the third Wednesday in February, which I pray is not Valentine's Day. I love you all, but I don't want to spend it with you.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Valentine's Day is Saturday.

MS. VERNOLA:

That's President's Week. We have a busy night that night.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, Wednesday night, we are open to the public that week. Unless you want to meet in the garage.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What about Normandy Manor?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, we can get someone else to do the recording.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Ann Marie, is that okay with you?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes, the third Wednesday of February, that's fine.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Seriously, I had fun auctioning off the car. It was a lot of fun. I'm going to dig in my backyard and find out what else I can find and sell. Carol, we do have to register as a not-for-profit museum. It's very easy. I will put something up immediately. If you come up with anything else, we'll do it. If I knew of a nursery that would buy the trees today, I would call them and tell them to buy the trees, and I wouldn't even ask you for your help, but I don't.

MR. GISH:

I'll look for a nursery.

MR. GLASCOCK:

Huntington Chamber has its membership listing by category. If you click on membership and you go nursery, you might find some local –

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, we'll look into that.

MR. GLASCOCK:

I can call and find out what the numbers are.

MR. GISH:

Probably somebody in Huntington would be better because that would be closer.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, old business? New business?

MS. ANKER:

Can I ask about the projector really quickly?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The RFP is sitting on the Commissioner of DPW's desk. He is looking at it.

MS. ANKER:

Any idea when he might –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Any day now. He is going to be getting calls from Legislators, so I'm sure he's moving on that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We completed our end of that in July. We are waiting now. Okay, can I have a motion?

MS. ANKER:

What happens after he approves that?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Then it has to go out for bid. I think they did a short one, four weeks, then it comes back. They're going to have to analyze it. They will have to hire our planetarium consultant. That person will need to take four weeks to put together the RFP for the actual equipment. Then that RFP will go out. They will have to give him at least four to six weeks. Then that will come back, and we will evaluate it. Maybe best case scenario is May 1 or middle of June to order it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then we have to wait seven months to deliver it.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Nine to twelve months.

MR. DELUISE:

Motion.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? **We stand adjourned. (Vote: 9/0/0/6 Not Present: Mr. Swinson & Mr. Olivieri. Absent: Ms. LeBow & Mr. Sillman. Two vacant positions.)**

(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:55 P.M.)

SG/ap