

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on August 18, 2010, in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Noel Gish – President
Michael B. DeLuise – 1st Vice President
Gretchen Oldrin Mones – 2nd Vice President
Ronald A. Beattie – Treasurer
Donald B. McKay – Secretary
Sarah Anker – Trustee
Thomas D. Glascock – Trustee
Dr. William Rogers – Trustee
Elizabeth Jean Cambria – Trustee
Christopher Hahn - Trustee
Carol Ghiorso-Hart – Executive Director
Peter Newman – Staff
John Pokorny - Staff
Lance Reinheimer – Budget Review Office
Michael Iadevaia- Accountant
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

Absent:

Dr. Steve Gittelman – Trustee
Dan Olivieri - Trustee
David Bottomley - Trustee
Kevin Peterman – Trustee

(Mr. Noel Gish called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.)

MR. GISH:

This is the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees meeting for August, 2010. I'd ask you to stand for a Pledge to the Flag.

(Salute to the Flag)

Thank you. Ann Marie, do we have a list of guests in attendance?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

MR. GISH:

Can I have a motion to approve the minutes of last month's meeting?

MS. ANKER:

Motion.

MS. CAMBRIA:

Second.

MR. GISH:

All in favor? Opposed? **(Vote: 8/0/0/7 Not Present: Mr. Glascock & Mr. DeLuise. Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Bottomley, Dr. Gittelman & Mr. Peterman. One vacant position.)**

Michael, our outside Accountant, is here right now. Before he has to buzz off to different places, I'm going to open the meeting up with any questions you might have concerning the budget for 2011 or any questions that were not answered at the July meeting. Michael, if you could just come up and take a position somewhere down on the end there. Does anyone have any questions regarding for the 2011 budget?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We do have a slight change in the budget under Social Security. It's on the third page under Employee Benefits. It should have read \$78,000 requested in 2011. I just handed out an update. Does everybody have that? If you have the version I handed out last week or when I had emailed it to you, it had read \$68,000, and it should have been \$78,000.

MR. HAHN:

I've got some questions. The 2010 revenues that we see, are these final at this point?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The 2010 – that was the budget for 2010. The projections for –

MR. HAHN:

So my question is, do you have the actuals for 2010?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have through – if you look at the Treasurer's Report, those were the actuals through June.

MR. HAHN:

And the year ends in June?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, the year ends in December.

MR. HAHN:

Okay, the year ends in December. Are we on pace to meet the revenues that we are – how are we compared to our estimates?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Again, if you look at the Treasurer's Report that was handed out today, the business plan is the budget, the 2010 budget. So you can see where the variances are. Right now we're on target pretty much.

MR. HAHN:

I'm looking at a \$150,000 deficit, if I go to the column in the far right.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Right, we have a \$168,000 – that's a deficit in the revenue but the expenses are \$168,000. So actually right now our projections are \$18,000 –

MR. HAHN:

My point is I don't want to budget for – I'm sorry, I don't know if you emailed this out prior to this meeting. Did you?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes.

MR. HAHN:

Could I just ask a point of privilege? Could we, for future meetings, have action items and an agenda sent at least a week prior to the meeting with the attachments? For example, we have a budget vote today. I get 100 emails a day. I'm sure we all get 100 emails a day. I probably did not see this. I did see the meeting notice. I would like if it was a clear agenda with a heading and attachments with the items on it.

I know we don't send out an agenda – we haven't in the past sent out an agenda, but I think it's good governance for us to send out an agenda so that all the Board Members can view the items prior to the meeting, and then we could actually have more productive meetings with people not looking at things and trying to react to what's going on as the meeting is going on, as I am doing now. I apologize for that because you did send this out. I should have read it, but I did not.

My point is that I would hate for us to budget for revenues that we have not received and we don't anticipate on receiving. For example, I don't see any reduction in Hotel/Motel Tax revenue, which I know is going to phase down year by year. We are estimating \$693,000 – that is a \$12,000 variance in our budget. It's going to go down again next year.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Well, it may or may not. That number, actually, we had discussed with BRO because of course it's a percentage of the tax. That was the number that they felt was a realistic number. Whether they accounted for a reduction of 1 percent or not, I don't know.

MR. GISH:

Lance, can you address that?

MR. REINHEIMER:

This number assumes the full 5 percent of the anticipated income from the Hotel/Motel Tax. For 2010 we looked at it last week, and it's pretty much on track for what's in the budget. We were advised of a percent increase. I was involved with the –

MR. HAHN:

A percent increase or percent decrease?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, a percent increase in terms of sales tax growth. That would be wrapped in Hotel/Motel Tax. It would have similar type growth, but there is legislation that you could reduce it one percent a year. We don't have any indication that the Legislature or County Executive is planning on doing that one way or the other.

Our assumption is to maintain it at the current 5 percent. I'm pretty sure the intent of the legislation, as far as the Suffolk County Legislature was concerned, they were not looking to decrease the distribution from the Hotel/Motel Tax next year.

MR. HAHN:

I do know that the Hotel/Motel Tax will phase out in five years. I don't think it started this year. We didn't have it for a full year this year, did we?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, we did.

MR. HAHN:

You did.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It could phase out. It could reduce up to one percent for the five years, but that would be voted on. It's not a sure thing that it would.

MR. GISH:

It's a discretionary –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It could be down to 5 percent in five years, but that would be a legislative situation. Again, when we work on the Operating Budget, we did get a little bit of input from BRO on things like this.

MR. HAHN:

And you're from BRO? What's your name?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, sorry.

MR. REINHEIMER:

My name is Lance Reinheimer. I'm the Assistant Director, and effective Monday I'll be retired.

MR. HAHN:

Congratulations. So you have no incentive to lie.

MR. REINHEMER:

I've had 15 years experience working with the Vanderbilt Museum. I'm pretty familiar with the financials and the projections for the revenues. Obviously, I haven't seen or reviewed this budget, but as far as Hotel/Motel Tax, our office, as of last week, we looked at it because we had concerns for the museum and for other agencies that get distributions from there. We wanted to make sure it was somewhat on track because we're getting ready to do the 2011 budget, which means we have to look at where we're going to end 2010.

MR. BEATTIE:

Since you're saying you're retiring on Friday, I think now it's safe to say that you've been a great friend to the Vanderbilt. We wouldn't have gone on record because that seems to be a black stain right away.

MR. REINHEIMER:

By the time Ann Marie transcribes this, I could be in a foreign country.

MR. HAHN:

I am a little concerned, just based on the information that I have received prior to joining the Board about the Hotel/Motel Tax. I didn't take this appointment lightly. I was asked two years ago to do it. I was asked again a year ago, and then this year I was told that I have to do it for various reasons. No, it's a joke. I gave in this year.

One of the questions I had was the relationship between the Hotel/Motel Tax and the Museum and how the County would be supporting it. One of the things I was told was that there is a concern that the Vanderbilt Board is not taking seriously the County Legislature's intent to reduce the Hotel/Motel Tax every year by a certain percentage or that it will be phased out over five years.

I do respect his conclusion that the Hotel/Motel Tax itself will not be reduced as part of the County budget because of the revenue that it will be producing. I think that's what you're saying. I don't know that the County Legislature, when it goes to do a budget in the fall, is going to give us the same percentage of Hotel/Motel Tax that it gave us last year. That is just from what I heard from people who should know. I

just don't know if anyone has had any additional discussions with the Legislature based on that.

(Mr. DeLuise entered the meeting at 7:20 p.m.)

MR. MCKAY:

They cut a percentage on this tax, say they cut it back 5 percent, but the money is still there. My concern is Mr. Levy is going to take this money to balance his budget as a one-shot. Legislation passed in New York State by Steve Englebright – the strict purpose was to help relieve not to help balance the County budget. If the Legislature cuts this back – under the State legislation, if they could actually do that –

MR. HAHN:

No, they're not going to cut back the Hotel/Motel Tax. They're going to cut back the revenue that this museum gets from the tax. They will take revenue in other parks and other museums across the County who have had similar problems and similar needs and maybe even greater needs.

Also they'll benefit from the attendance that we have here, the potential to raise additional revenue and the endowment that this museum has that other museums in the County do not have and other museums across the Island do not have.

There is a real possibility that the County Legislature will and may have indicated – they indicated when they granted this gift to the museum of the Hotel/Motel Tax, that it would be phased out over five years and that the museum should plan accordingly.

My concern is that it's the same dollar value in our budget as it was last year, that we are not planning accordingly and that in September we're going to be back here or maybe in October, and we will be back here discussing how to make up for that shortfall rather than doing some smart budgeting now and planning for it so that we're not in crisis in October.

I believe that – and I could be wrong – but from the conversations that I've had, I don't think I am. I know that some others have had these conversations with the Legislature off-line where they stressed that this is going to be phased out over five years and indeed it was discussed when we were granted this money, that it would phase out over five years. This is year one. Next year is year two, so that means it's going to be phased down soon.

MR. GISH:

They have the potential, but they may not, but they –

MR. HAHN:

But I don't understand why we're not budgeting based on what they have explicitly told us, that they will do it.

MS. ANKER:

I'm not sure that this is all that explicit, that's what I'm getting from –

MR. DELUISE:

I think they made it pretty clear in the beginning that this was not going to be a permanent thing.

MR. HAHN:

And that it would be phased out over five years.

MR. DELUISE:

Very clear.

MS. ANKER:

But if we could get 5 percent for the next two years – in other words, we don't have guidelines or whatever. Maybe we should get some type of guidelines.

MR. BEATTIE:

I think we do from BRO.

MR. HAHN:

But BRO could only tell us what they anticipate the revenue for the Motel/Hotel Tax will be. BRO will say, if we are getting 5 percent of that revenue, this is a realistic number for you to budget with. The problem is that BRO cannot address the fact that the Legislature might instead of giving us 5 percent, they might give us four and a half or four percent next year.

I anticipate that they will give us less next year based on their original appropriation to us of this money and based on conversations that I've had. I do believe that the Hotel/Motel Tax may be phased down this year, and we will have to find another source of revenue to cover that, or we will have to tighten our belt as a result.

What I'm saying is that I know we're here to vote on a budget tonight, but I think that perhaps a communication with the Legislature is in

order, or perhaps we should not do our budget in August. We should wait until the Legislature –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I've had to present a budget by the end of June to the County Executive. We always in December revisit the budget. We revise it. We update it. At that point we pretty much well know how the year went. We'll have a better sense by that time what our endowment interest might be, as well as Hotel/Motel Tax.

I just wanted to say, don't think that this is the 2011 budget because it will not be. By the time of the year we will be looking at it, it's our best guess at the time and it's assuming that the planetarium projector is in place by the end of the year for a month or two. There are other things, too, by the end of the year when we'll have a much better idea.

Because of the County Executive's needs, we do have to present them with a budget in June. It's hard to be as realistic as we need to be until we get to December. We will be revising the budget in December.

MR. BEATTIE:

Obviously, the Executive weighs in on our assumptions as does the Legislature.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Budget Review reviews this, and the County Executive's Office reviews this.

MR. GISH:

And they tell us how much they think we can pull from the endowment and what the endowment has reached. But I think you should be aware of the fact that since last year we have made changes in a number of areas to try to improve upon that revenue generation.

The cell tower, which began about a year ago, and the meeting in July here with a community meeting to assess the means of the cell tower operation, that has been finalized. We will more than likely turn that over to the County Attorney some time this week for review. The cell tower provider has been chosen since the RFP.

The catering RFP and the catering choice is also in the County Attorney's hands, so that is taking place.

The gift shop, which has already been painted, we are in communication with the company that's going to come in and manage the gift shop to improve revenue, so we will have an increase in there also.

Over the last year, Carol moved a major element which was an outside security agency. We had an outside agency. I believe it was Nights Security, right? We have moved that inside. Again, it may be one of the things that you may or may not have seen. You may have seen an increase in our salaries. We should be decreasing staff, but that's because we dumped one of the outside agencies and brought in inside salaries. But in doing so, we saved about \$75,000 in the total cost. Is that about right?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes.

MR. GISH:

We had been making the changes that we can make. The Legislature, additionally, when I came on board about a year and a month ago, told me to cut staff. They said we could also sell the mummy. These are their suggestions, just so you will understand where we're coming from. The museum can't sell part of its artifacts to raise revenue. It will lose its accreditation with the AAM and a number of other sources. Reducing the staff, you'd have to come here and look. Peter, raise your hand. He's 50 percent of our outside staff. We have 42 acres, eleven buildings –

MR. HAHN:

I'm just saying if we're going to get a 20 percent reduction, in my mind, we should be realistic when we budget for it.

MR. GISH:

We have made every single attempt we can within the framework of what we can do as a museum. We are not Oheka Castle. This is not a wedding factory. We can't do that. The major aim of this facility is an educational facility as Vanderbilt put it forth. We have the planetarium.

If we come on line with the new star projector -- right now that star projector contract is with the County. Do you follow my logic—

MR. HAHN:

I was here last month.

MR. GISH:

It's with the County. There's just so much we can do. We are the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium. Those are the two keys words there. They have to understand that if we put a new star projector in this 40 year old facility, we're going to increase admissions. We're going to increase revenue drastically. That's going to help us in our sustainability.

Once the cell tower gets up and operating, that's going to be a monthly income. We had a committee meeting this week to pick the final provider. We did so based on an assessment of the revenue that could be generated. But that was only after we had meetings.

Again, the County is going to ask us, "Why aren't you moving forward? Why aren't you moving fast enough?" We met with DPW to find out from a technical aspect which cell tower RFP – the answers to the RFP was to their satisfaction. We met with the Department of Information Technology and Donna Cumella, who put in her assessment of that. We then went and saw Robert Lipp from BRO who did an analysis of the overall 30 year projection.

MR. HAHN:

Is there a Deputy County Attorney who is assigned to handle our stuff?

MR. GISH:

The first person to handle us was Jim Morgo.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's not the County Attorney's Office.

MR. GISH:

Oh yes. I'm so embarrassed. I'm sorry.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

There are many County Attorneys who work with us depending on our project. We have one County Attorney that's helping us with the cell tower. We talk to another one who helps us with legal issues and resource issues. I usually communicate with Christine Malafi, and she will assign one of her people. There are about five different County Attorneys that I'm in contact with right now.

I understand exactly your concern. When you're looking at this, the best I can say is that in December we will be doing a very realistic budget. We need that.

MR. HAHN:

Maybe we should just call this a draft budget.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I call it a draft. The purpose of this is to give it to the County Executive. We're including -- because we're a department, we need to have it. In the past, these documents were fantasy because they always had to get the fund balance deficit zeroed out. We try to be a little bit realistic.

MR. DELUISE:

Carol, over the last two years, has really been very careful about being accurate as you're going along.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

When I get to December, we will be really getting our ducks in a row, talking to the Legislature, so that we'll have a realistic budget as we can. We'll know where we stand in all these other projects. We'll be revisiting all this.

Also, what makes us a little different is that we're a single organization at a Finance Committee. I have, the Treasurer and the Board has strong oversight over everything. A department here doesn't get a budget. If I see we're not making money or if revenue is down for membership, we cut.

MR. HAHN:

As a Trustee, we need to question budgets and revenue projects, which is probably one of our more important jobs, I would think. I am concerned about that. I want to note for the record that I believe we will be reduced by 20 percent in our Hotel/Motel share. I think we should be making contingency plans for that. I think it's fine for us to request more than that from the County, and we should. But I don't believe that that was the intent of the Legislature and that we should be --

MR. BEATTIE:

The one statement -- the Legislature's perception is that we don't take that decrease over the five years seriously. I just reject that all together. I think we constantly hear stuff like that. It comes back to us, that we don't take such and such serious.

MR. HAHN:

When you present them with a budget without a decrease in the Hotel/Motel Tax, that's not taking it seriously.

MR BEATTIE:

I mean based on the logic that you just heard and the guidance that we get from BRO – I guess the problem that I have is that the things that we hear back in terms of the perception of this Board and how seriously we take this, as an example, I don't get why we keep hearing this perception back.

MR. HAHN:

Just from my knowledge, it was somewhat – not a major controversy, but it was somewhat controversial whether the Hotel/Motel Tax should be given to the Vanderbilt to begin with. There was some deal making and horse trading that went back and forth between some of the members of the Legislature and the County Executive to make the deal to grant some of the money for the Vanderbilt.

One of the key points that lead to the conclusion of the deal in our favor was that this would be a short-term deal that would be phased out over five years with the idea that over the five years our endowment would come back.

MR. BEATTIE:

No thanks, by the way, to the County Legislature dragging their feet in managing our endowment. It took them a year. Perception versus reality –

MR. HAHN:

Again, we could blame them all we want, but they gave us \$760,000 last year, which is a pretty substantial amount of money in a tough economy.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It was \$705,000.

MR. GISH:

And what were we allowed to take last year from the County?

MR. HAHN:

I don't know. I think you were allowed to take \$705,000.

MS. GHIORSI -HART:

We were allowed to take \$800,000.

MR. GISH:

So when you talk about fiduciary responsibility, we're looking at a Board who took that very, very seriously and did not take any extra money from the County for anything that was frivolous.

In fact, during the time period when there was an issue dealing with insurance liability, we could have very gingerly taken another \$95,000 from County and then given the County \$95,000 back to cut our bottom line. That was unethical.

We chose not to do that, at that stage of the game, and kept the County money that we've acquired. Every dime was reviewed by the Oversight Committee that was here.

During that one year there was not one criticism of the handling of –

MR. HAHN:

You guys are answering my argument with different points. I'm quite impressed by all the hard work that you all do here, very impressed. But my point is, if we were allowed to take \$800,000 last year, next year we're allowed to take 20 percent less than \$800,000 that is not what we budgeted for. We budgeted for \$705,000.

MR. MCKAY:

Has Mr. Lindsay told us in writing or verbally when you do the budget, cut 20 percent from Hotel/Motel Tax? Has he done that?

MR. HAHN:

That was part of the negotiation.

MR. MCKAY:

But has anybody told us to cut 20 percent? If we cut 20 percent, where is the money going?

MS. GHIORSI -HART:

They said that it may be cut. It wasn't a definite, but they said it may be up to one percent.

MR. GISH:

It's up to the discretion of the Legislature. I think if they see us moving toward sustainability, if they see the cell tower come in, if they

see the catering move forward, if they see some relationship with Suffolk Community College developing, if, in fact, they see the gift shop developing, if, in fact, they see those things move forward that have not been done before, I think they'd be more inclined to give us that leeway in that percentage. I could be absolutely, totally wrong.

MR. HAHN:

But you are aware of the fact that they did intend to reduce our revenue by 20 percent. I'm not making this up. Trust me, I would rather not. I would rather not have this 20 minute conversation.

(Mr. Glascock entered the meeting at 7:40 p.m.)

MS. ANKER:

Let me just say something real quick. I do want to say in addition to the grant, I think what has happened is that we have to consider that we're getting a projector. Basically the museum had the rug pulled out from under it. We have no money. From that, basically it was born in infancy a business of some type that needs to be sustained. In that year or so we created these different projects that we've been working on, cell tower, caterers, all of the above.

Speaking of that, I really think we should put in writing and send to the Legislature – again instead of \$800,000, we took \$705,000. That needs to be documented because I don't remember that. Chris wasn't aware of that. That's something really important to unfortunately make our case because we are basically on trial right now to prove that we are moving forward. I think we are moving forward.

I want to address the fact that it doesn't seem like we have exactly a road map as to how much we're going to decline in the next five years, the percentage that's given to us. Just keep in mind that not only did we have to start pretty much from scratch to create sustainability, but we also have a huge multi-million dollar project that we're going to have to sustain.

With that in mind, we do need to prepare for that. So you're saying, we need to cut every year. Maybe we should hope that we can keep some type of – you know, the five percent for one or two years and then hopefully we won't need it once we get the projector in place.

But again, in the next year or two, we're preparing for hopefully what will be our life sustaining project that will help us propel the museum

into a ongoing life of sustainability. I just wanted to put that on the record.

MR. HAHN:

I think those are great arguments. The problem is that we can argue all we want that things are going to change. If they decide that we're due for a 20 percent reduction –

DR. ROGERS:

How realistic is it to reduce the amount that you're going to require when you know you're going to require it. To satisfy because the Legislature wants certain satisfaction?

The fact remains we may require more money than that. If the emphasis is put forth to raise funds in other areas which we are doing, then it doesn't make sense to annotate a number in there to tell them, well, we're working because this is what you want us to do. I think it makes a lot more sense to let them know that we require this money and made it possible to get that and maybe possibly get more. It doesn't make sense to put numbers just to please them.

MS. ANKER:

I know, but again the museum is like an infant. We need to wean this infant off the fact that it's been getting funding for so long, and we're talking decades upon decades. We've only been doing this for a couple of years.

I understand your point, but I think we're proving ourselves, as we will continue to prove ourselves that we can create a self-sustaining entity here. Everyone deserves a lot of credit because you deserve credit for bringing this up because, again, sometimes we do need to bring up issues that other people think – I'm sure the Legislature is thinking about this. It's great. We need to bring it up and bring up these facts and figures literally.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think your idea – to make it clear, either call this budget a draft budget and then in December we have our 2011 budget or we do an updated Operating Budget in December. In December we will have a very firm idea about –

MR. HAHN:

Is there anything that requires us to vote on a proposed budget right now?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Technically – I mean the budget that was submitted to the County Legislature –

MR. GISH:

We did submit a budget to the Legislature and to the County Executive. I think even if it's a tentative budget and you want it stated so, and that Ann Marie puts it down as the tentative budget, I still think that we should have –

MR. DELUISE:

We still need to set our direction on what we're –

MR. GISH:

Even if it's tentative, I want this Board to know that this budget that we have is the one we're operating with until those changes are made in December.

MR. DELUISE:

Can I say something? For the new Trustees, I think they should get to know what's been done with the budget over the last few years. It's been a budget that works with very limited resources that we watch throughout the year. We can always revise it. But you have to start with something realistic. I think, Carol, the budgets that we've been working with have been realistic. There is no fantasy in them. This is what we need to keep it going.

Right now we expect to get the tourism tax. If it changes, then we have to revise it. We know that. Hopefully they'll decide to do more for us or somebody else will come in and help us. But we need a working budget, otherwise we're not going to get our job done.

MS. ANKER:

We have so many factors running against the museum. Basically, the economy is awful. There is not one museum in the country that's not hurting right now.

Again, on top of that, we're related to a government entity. Government is not –

MR. HAHN:

There's a lot of pain coming with a budget cycle. We should be very aware of that.

MS. ANKER:

But, again, I think a document stating these facts would be very helpful to the Legislature and the County Executive, as to – I think it's great that Chris is asking these questions because you know someone is thinking about them. You know they're going to raise a point where they might not ask us, but we have some answers. I think those answers need to be out there and getting to the people that need to hear them.

MS. CAMBRIA:

Can I say something? You bring up the point that other museums don't have endowments. We're considered one of the haves because we have an endowment. But I just found out that we don't have any control over the administration of our endowment.

MR. HAHN:

We don't have control over the administration of the endowment, but—

MS. CAMBRIA:

We don't control over whether it makes money or loses money.

MR. HAHN:

From what I understand for the last three years it's made no money or for the past two years it's made no money. It's been sitting in bonds and cash, which is a shame.

MS. CAMBRIA:

But the County Legislature, to my understanding, was responsible for the fact that we are not able to do that. It kind of works both ways. If they think that the endowment –

MR. HAHN:

But, Betsy, let me explain something. The fact that they're slow in getting our endowment back together, all these things are good points, but when it comes to making a budget, we're going to have very little say in it. There's going to be a deal being made, and somebody at one point said that this is going to be reduced by 20 percent.

There is \$115,000 that some Legislator or some County Executive is going to say, "Let's take that \$115,000 that they're not supposed to get this year and put it somewhere else." They're going to take their

time because this is clearly not the number one priority of the Legislature.

When somebody is making a budget, and there was a deal cut to give us money that we never got before, the Hotel/Motel Tax, and the deal was that this was going to phase out over five years, someone remembers that because they remembered it enough to tell me. They remembered enough to tell some of us in this room.

They're thinking, okay, September is going to come around, and there's 20 percent of \$800,000 and somebody in the Legislature – I know if I was writing my budget – and I've written County budgets – and I knew there was \$125,000 that wasn't supposed to be going somewhere, I would take it and put it someplace else, especially if there was a hole in my budget. And there's going to be a massive hole in this year's budget.

DR. ROGERS:

That Hotel/Motel Tax was basically put in there to replace the loss of the endowment. The endowment was handled by the County. It wasn't handled by the Board here. So if you want to look at it, when we're going to reduce the Hotel/Motel Tax, by that time perhaps the endowment revenue will come up. Which way do you want to look at it? Are you going to put a number on there for the endowment to come up and reduce the Hotel/Motel Tax now or let it sit the way it logically works?

MR. HAHN:

If it was up to me, I'd give you more money. It's not up to me. Don't look at me like I want this to happen. I don't.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Chris, in December I try to be as absolutely dead realistic as possible. If September comes, and I run out of money, I don't have anyone to go to or ask. There's no "I don't pay my people." It's not like we're a little department. This is it. Whatever money comes in, that's all we have. There's no looking back. So when it comes to December, we will be looking as realistically as possible.

MR. HAHN:

And I apologize for making this a 40 minute conversation about something that really shouldn't have taken that long.

DR. ROGERS:

I think the budget is intelligent for what we have. To nitpick each item on it doesn't make any sense at this time.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We will have a Finance Committee meeting in December, when we work on the updated budget. If anyone wants to be part of that – I mean, really I go through each line and ask where we can cut and what's realistic. We're not going to get the projector – we look through. There is no fall back here. We can't go to daddy or whatever else. We don't have a reserve fund. This is it. What comes in goes out and we're done. I want to be as realistic as possible. This budget has other functions. We can talk about that later. But for planning purposes in December we will go down and try to be as realistic.

MR. MCKAY:

I understand what you're saying. The intelligence he's getting from the folks out in Hauppauge is indicating that they'll take 20 percent of \$700,000 and you've got \$140,000 that they're going to take out of our budget.

What are they going to do with it? They're going to dump it to develop this into a member item for the lawmakers. The lawmakers out east maybe don't even know where the Vanderbilt Museum is and have never been here. I'm really concerned about that. First of all, this isn't just Suffolk County. This is a State law. The County opted into it. For the County to say that this is their fund, this is not their fund. It's not.

MR. HAHN:

I've been involved with the Hotel/Motel Tax for a long time. The Hotel/Motel Tax doesn't have to go to this museum. It could go to any number of museums or parks or anything that has to do with tourism in Suffolk County. That has been interpreted to be a wide variety of things.

Let me be very clear. There are other museums in Suffolk County that Suffolk County owns or that are not owned by the County. They're in other districts that are competing for this money as well. They believe there is going to be \$140,000 more of it in the budget this year because less of it is coming to us. It's not going into a fund. It's not operating outside the intent of the legislation.

The deal that was made to bring this money here said it would be phased out over five years with a 20 percent reduction here. That is

my understanding of it. This budget does not reflect that. I'm pointing that out because that is our job as Trustees, to do that. Not because I'm trying to criticized Carol or criticize you or criticize anybody.

MR. MCKAEY:

They cut the budget by 20 percent and now we have a deficit –

MR. GALSCOCK:

If I could just add something just to maybe put things into perspective. I had a conversation a year or two ago about our economic problems with someone that is very involved in the budget and the finances of Suffolk County. The Suffolk County budget is about \$2.8 billion.

What this person told me is they have to make projections. If they're off 2 percent or if the revenues are down 2 percent, that's \$56 million. That's about four times the budget of the City of Glen Cove, the whole municipality of Glen Cove. That makes it a very difficult reality to deal with, but it is reality. Those are big dollars, and they have to come from somewhere, unfortunately.

MR. DELUISE:

Can I just say that as Trustees, it is our responsibility to talk to our Legislators and tell them the need to support or to – there is no decision about what the future of the Hotel/Motel Tax is going to be. I think in the past we have been very good about explaining the kind of support we need. I think that's what we need to do, to go and explain this to them.

And, yes, absolutely there are people who in different organizations should compete with limited funds as things change. Right now we have at least on paper the amount of money that we think is going to be committed to us. We planned for that as a working budget.

I would suggest that we accept this as a working budget, and as we look at things that change we advise –

MR. HAHN:

By the way, if we were entitled to \$800,000, \$705,000 is only \$45,000 less than I expect us to be eligible for next year, quite frankly. Because it would be a 20 percent reduction from \$800,000, and I'm assuming that's \$140,000 or around there.

MR. DELUISE:

We're being responsible in not taking money we don't need. I just think that we, as Trustees, should be knocking on doors and explaining what we're doing and explaining our needs to get the equipment in on time. I think that's our job.

MR. GLASCOCK:

In this economy certainly we're in competition with other venues and programs for money. It's incumbent upon us to give a realistic picture and show a need to demonstrate why if this need is met it's going to be a good return for the County. They want to see – whether it be a grant, program or whatever, anybody that gives money wants to know that they're going to have a good return on it, that they're not just throwing that money away.

MR. DELUISE:

In the past the County Legislature has been very supportive of the museum, and not that they all agree on that, but they have done a lot. They have stuck their necks out individually and as a group to see what they could do to help us. I think they have the right to say, "Hey, what are you going to do to support the museum?" It's a good working relationship that we have to keep the communication open.

MS. ANKER:

But, again, we need to make them aware. We, as a Board of Trustees, need to make the Legislature and the County Executive aware of what we're doing, not every detail but the basic things we've done.

We've jumped through many, many hurdles. Honestly, I don't know if they're really aware. I don't know if they're – maybe if we create a document. Again, what's tough is that Noel and Carol and everyone here, we're working very hard, especially certain people are incredibly involved day to day, hour to hour. Where do you find the time to write this stuff down?

But I think there needs to be maybe some type of documentation, nothing too detailed, saying, "Look, this is where we are." We could pass it out at the Legislature round table.

MR. GISH:

If anybody is aware of the Education Brochures that went out prior to the last two years, they are in no way, shape or form the quality of the brochure that's in front of you now. These go to all the schools in Suffolk County, all the schools in Nassau County, and selected schools

in Queens that have been out here. That's a major undertaking to really fulfill one of the missions of this institution, which is education.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

Tomorrow they're going to all of the PTA organizations.

MR. GISH:

They go to the County Legislature. Everyone got a copy of these. I made sure that everyone got a copy. We want them very much aware of what we're doing, as far as where the museum function is concerned.

I spent too much time emailing. In fact, I'm told I email too much. If I email an Aide, I better email the Legislator as well because it goes down the line. They get emails from me weekly. I had visits today. I went to Neil Toomb's office today. I went to the Legislature already this week. It's only Wednesday.

There is no one in the County that doesn't know that we're operating for a cell tower, the catering, the gift shop and doing everything we possibly can to raise money.

If they choose to lessen the income coming in from the County, then that's their choice. We will do everything we can to – but I will tell you, as I mentioned before regarding Peter, we have cut as much as we can legitimately do and function as an institution. Peter has a field day when the temperature drops below 55 because the grass is not growing and the two guys can then go inside to paint. There are no more cuts we can do.

I will hear it from the County, what are they doing? If they would come, I have offered a hands-on tour of this place to every County Legislator to come and see what you're voting on. Come and see the structures. Come and see the facility. Come and see the buildings. Come and see what we're doing. Come when kids are here. Come when we had Alex Torres. Come when we have the car show.

MR. HAHN:

Maybe we could use that extra \$95,000 from the County and hire a couple of people. If we had it available to us, we probably should have taken it.

MR. GISH:

My fault. We didn't want to be greedy. We cut the cost, and Carol did exactly what she was supposed to do. We kept the cost to a minimum.

MR. HAHN:

We've been talking now for about 55 minutes about the budget. I take full responsibility, and I'm sorry but –

MR. IADEVAIA:

We were going to receive \$800,000, and we did reduce it this year. We still have \$35,000 excess in revenue over expenses in this budget. Technically monetarily wise, you're not talking a lot of money. We've reduced it and cut out that excess.

MR. BEATTIE:

I make the motion that the Board endorses this budget as a working budget.

MR. DELUISE:

Second.

MR. GISH:

On the question? All in favor? Opposed? **(Vote: 10/0/0/5
Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Bottomley, Dr. Gittelman & Mr. Peterman. One vacant position.)**

Is there anybody in attendance that wants to address the Board?

Gretchen, Education Report.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

As we have just heard, the very good news is that the 2010-2011 Education Brochure has been printed, packaged, sorted and mailed out to the schools, over 500 of them, close to 600.

All of you have a copy of this year's brochure, which is really upscale. It has also come in ahead of schedule. Single packets are still being stuffed, sealed labeled and sorted in preparation for mailing to individuals and support organizations. As Noel said, copies have been hand-delivered to the County Legislature and the County Executive's Office for distribution.

Part of the reason why the brochure looks so great is thanks to Tom Curran, who designed it.

Staff is preparing for a busy fall season. There are big plans for Halloween, which is always a fun time here at the Vanderbilt. October 16 is Astronomy Day and Night. The new planetarium show, "Night Life" will premiere on September 11.

Stephanie continues to be busy developing new TV and print portfolio. In May *Animal Planet* called to arrange filming a special here on taxidermy. As you know, our magnificently restored whale-shark is thought to be the world's largest skin mounted fish and is a work of taxidermy art.

Dave Schwendeman and George Dante, the experts who restored Willie the whale-shark and also the dioramas, are part of this special which will air nationwide around December. Incidentally the sea lion is back and the last iguana is going to be restored for free.

Stephanie worked on getting various images, some from "Over the Seven Seas" for *Wealth TV*. This will air sometime soon.

When the LI Association asked Stephanie for a piece to include in their publication, she gave them a Living History blurb with images.

After Rosey Mulderrig toured the mansion and parts of the estate that are little known or ever seen, she wrote a great article for the *Village Tattler*, using information, quotes and photos provided by Stephanie.

Kim Mockler, who is researching architect Maurice Fatio, requested and was sent copies of the original blueprints from Alva Base in Florida for use in her book.

Another researcher is doing a thesis on Tudor portraits, of which we have two. She will include them in her dissertation and the Vanderbilt will be credited.

Emily Cohen is an intern who will be here for the summer to help with the marine collection. She is following in Willie's footsteps and may soon go to the Galapagos Islands.

The newly awarded NYSCA grant will contribute toward paying the salary of a curatorial apprentice in Decorative Arts.

Finally, Stephanie supplied a newspaper article that shows the Vanderbilt has history with the Thatched Cottage. When the Bittner family, the original owners, fell on hard times, Willie K. Vanderbilt II agreed to buy a 75 gallon drum of kerosene from them every day. Mr. Bittner said, "That is what helped the family survive."

If anyone is interested in looking at the rest of that article, which is pretty fascinating, I will pass that around. I will also pass around the article from the *Village Tattler*. Are there any questions?

MR. GISH:

Tom.

MR. GLASCOCK:

How many school districts do you think have come and visited the museum –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I forget, but I think almost every district on the Island. We have heavy attendance all the way out from Montauk to Queens. We have the numbers. Periodically we go to the Legislature and let them see what schools come here.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

There are even a number of private schools and even home schooled children come here.

MS. ANKER:

Would it be difficult to list the school districts that actually attend the Vanderbilt so people could see that?

MR. GISH:

I've done that in the past where Legislators have said that no one comes from their district. I have intentionally gone and found that to be the case because a number of people from the South Shore will say that we're a North Shore district. It becomes sort of a broken kingdom problem.

In reality the Vanderbilt is for Suffolk County. We are doing a lot for – if you take a look at the number of elementary school kids that we have coming in, it's throughout the Island, Nassau and Queens. This is a Long Island facility. It serves more people than just Suffolk County.

MR. GLASCOCK:

We have all heard the argument against supporting this museum financially because it's a Centerport Museum, but it's not.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We can periodically go to the Legislature and let them know which ones come to visit. If you think about it, if you want to go to a planetarium or the Museum of Natural History, we actually get more people from way out east because they cannot make the trip all the way into the city. They come to us. Where some of the local districts, because we're in their backyards, they see us all the time. They are more likely to make the trip into the city. So we get a very wide distribution.

MR. GISH:

That will change once the star projection comes in. Carol and I talked with representatives from Konica/Minolta last month. They said that once we -- the fact that we had the 60 foot dome, once we get the new projector in, and we're getting a larger projector than we originally had planned for -- so we're going up one grade. That had to do with the contract, the RFP, and answering the RFP and a number of other things.

MR. BEATTIE:

At no additional cost.

MR. GISH:

We will probably be in the top ten planetariums in the world. That's where we will be. So you're not looking at a small facility. We then hope, and hopefully this will answer some of Chris' concerns, that when those people are heading in toward New York City, they're going to make a right hand turn from the east end and from Nassau and Queens.

They may, in fact, come out to the Vanderbilt because it's going to be a lot easier than dealing with New York City. We expect that to be an advantage.

We're also looking at funding. I'm not going to get into the specifics but we're looking at the possibility of adding additional items to the star projector, which would be a laser unit, which from what I gather, is \$62,000. If we can get that privately funded, that will add another bump up to the level of experience that they will be able to deal with at the planetarium.

I think that will be more adult oriented. We're going to get the young people with the educational programs. But the evening when we had the cycle programs and the evening programs, I think we'll be able to hit more of the adults at that stage of the game and move past Pink Floyd.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Don't knock Pink Floyd. That's what's sustaining us right now.

MR. GLASCOCK:

Speaking to the quality of the projector, that should be on every piece of paper that comes out of this museum.

MR. GISH:

We're trying to get sponsors to come into the planetarium and to fund things.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's a game changer. As soon as the contract is signed, there are a lot of things that we can hit the ground running with. We'll have a form start date. But until the contract is signed, we still don't know when this is going to –

MR. HAHN:

When is the contract being signed?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The contract is still in DPW. It isn't written yet. It's got to come out of DPW and then go to the County Attorney's Office.

MR. GISH:

It's a year from when it's signed to completion. That's a real optimistic statement, but we're trying to coordinate that so that when the projector is down, it will be in the summer time.

In my letter to the County Executive I stressed that if we could do this in June, July, August and September, that would be the best downtime for us because then the school programs start in September but the field trips would not begin until October.

We could take advantage of the majority of that year, if we're down during our down time to take advantage of the summer. It's critical for them to understand that we're planning ahead. We're not being willy nilly. We are actually planning to be down at a certain time.

If the contract is signed, and we can get them to do all the measurements and they can get going on the construction – and that takes a while for that size dome because it could be a 70 foot dome or a 60 foot dome, and that requires them to customize it, that’s something that we’re planning on. That’s something again that we have no control over it if the County has –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That will affect our budget. I wouldn’t really assume too much for 2011 as far as the new equipment coming in. As soon as we have the goodbye date, we will hit hard with a goodbye party for this big piece of equipment that many people have grown up with. They have some affection to it. I think there’s a lot we can do.

That’s why the budget for special events admissions is up. It’s not reflecting the new equipment, but it is reflecting the fact that I’m marketing, “Come and say goodbye.” I think we will do really well.

The start date is not until the contract is signed, and it took nine months to get the consultant contract finished.

MR. GLASCOCK:

The timing for that is very important.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have our fingers crossed.

MR. GISH:

My first projection for it to be in -- that was with a meeting with the County, which was October 2010.

MS. ANKER:

What’s great about the Vanderbilt, it’s incredibly affordable. Basically I was one of the PR Directors for school district for Eastern Suffolk BOCES. They have a huge contract with the Vanderbilt, one of the largest, if not the largest. BOCES is always looking for the biggest bang for the buck. It’s right here. Once we get the projector, it’s going to be even more amazing.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Again, any day I could come in and not only did the southern hemisphere fall off, but it could be completely done. Everyone understands because this is very, very old equipment. It could go at any time; it’s way beyond its life, and we keep our fingers crossed.

Hopefully we can keep on operating. We lose functionality every so often.

MR. GISH:

Our projector is old. The projector company that originally installed that in 1968/1969 expressed an interest in it for their museum. We have actually looked into that but the trouble is there is some old mercury switches in it that would have to be dealt with before I could ship it. I'm letting you know that I already looked into the possibility of selling it. We might just keep it.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We'll see what happens. We have nothing more to say on that right now.

MR. GISH:

Don, Buildings and Grounds.

MR. MCKAY:

I didn't get a chance to talk to Peter this week, but I've got a couple of quick things. We have three good pieces of news. One of them is Suffolk County DPW has agreed to take our lawn mowers that are basically – we have one lawn mower working right now for a 42 acre estate. DPW has been very gracious. We're going to basically load it on the truck, take it out to Yaphank, hopefully soon, and have them repair it for free. We're going to pack as much stuff as we can pack on the truck and trailer. I borrowed my friend's trailer, we'll get it out there and then we should get our huge maintenance crew repaired equipment.

The second thing is Joe Colamussi who is actually the brother Ralph Colamussi from the Thatched Cottage is a very successful car mechanic. He owns a big garage on Park Avenue. He has agreed to repair our equipment truck, which is our maintenance fleet, free of charge. We're going to figure out some way to promote him somehow, maybe with some signage or whatever.

I was talking to Joe, and he had some interest in the car in the basement of the caretakers –

MR. GISH:

The Rio or the Chrysler?

MR. MCKAY:

The Chrysler. I did some research and maybe some of you folks knew this, but I googled on the internet and found out that the car was actually owned by Mrs. Chrysler. It was a custom built Chrysler Imperial LeBaron in 1937. It's a one of a kind.

Joe was really excited by this, and kind of indicated he would help me. I'm still working on that. I haven't gotten him to come around yet, but he's going to try to talk to a local restoration guy, an auto body guy, but Joe is a mechanic. He would look at the engine and do that kind of stuff. It hasn't happened yet, but I'm still hoping it's going to happen.

We're speaking to Peter to do a scrap metal drive at the museum in October. We'll pick out a weekend that we can blanket the neighborhood, so don't throw anything out. We have a lot of metal junk around the museum. We need to get rid of it. It has no value. We have old vending machines that the vending guy actually looked at them and said they have no value and to get rid of them. But they are metal and metal has value.

I reached out to Gershaw Recycling. They're going to bring in dumpsters free of charge. There really is no expense for us. We'll get volunteers to work on the weekend. People can drive up to pull the crap out of their cars and throw it in the dumpster. Eaton Neck's Fire Department did one about two or three months ago. I spoke to the Chief. They got about \$2,000. We'll see what we can do.

I'd like to see that money go toward the maintenance guys so they can buy a new mower or something like that. But maybe we put some of that money toward restoring that car. If we get some agreements, then we can have some good will. We could bring some money to the table to purchase what they're going to need. I think if we get that car restored, we can do a nice little event and have that on display. It would be awesome.

MR. GISH:

Even just to roll it down for the number of car shows that we have. That would be great, rather than just sitting in the garage. I know the Rio – Peter was there the other day with me with Roger. We had the Rio just about ready to go. Of course, we sort of ran out of cranking people. It took too much energy to crank that sucker. It's a 1908 Rio. That's a classy looking car.

If we can get that one and the Chrysler ready, we can roll them into the courtyard for these events. It would actually bring out motor heads. Motors in cars bring out the testosterone element in a lot of visitors. It might increase the admissions that we're looking for. Anything we can do to promote that would be good.

MR. MCKAY:

The last thing is that the Rotary Club had a successful event last week at Oheka. We had them for years. They decided to go with Oheka. One of my friends is on the board, and we're going to sit down and see if we can sweeten the deal with them to try to get them back.

MR. HAHN:

Isn't there a Chrysler Regional Association? Maybe they'll restore it and give us some money.

MR. MCKAY:

I'm going to talk to the guy out west. I'm going to send him pictures. There's a Chrysler – there's actually an Imperial Club.

MR. HAHN:

But is there a Chrysler Dealership Association? Could we call them?

MS. ANKER:

They're in Germany, aren't they?

MR. HAHN:

Chrysler? No.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Stephanie, our Curator, has actually been trying to contact them. Both cars are accessioned, so they are museum collections. It's going to put a little bit of constraint on it. We can talk more about what that means at another time. It's a significant piece for Chrysler as a museum –

MR. HAHN:

If you're saying it's a one of a kind built for Chrysler's wife in 1937, that's a significant –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think one of the Chrysler daughters -- I forget her last name -- but she married someone very wealthy in the arts. There is a whole

museum regarding that. Anyway, we're trying to get some information from the company.

MR. HAHN:

Who does their advertising? Do you know?

MR. DELUISE:

Locally, there are some people – the Chrysler dealerships. I'll talk to someone I know.

MS. ANKER:

A German company –

MR. HAHN:

They're an American Company. There is an American advertiser. There is a Tri-State Chrysler group, I'm sure.

MR. DELUISE:

Yes.

MR. HAHN:

That could pay for this.

MR. GISH:

If somebody could follow through on that, it would be great. Just keep me in the loop, and we'll see if we can follow up on that. It's not going to happen in a month, but if you can get them interested in it and get some results, that would be great.

MR. HAHN:

It could take a year, but it's worth it. Ask for \$100,000 to restore the car. If it costs us \$20,000 to restore it –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Stephanie, our Curator, had done some research. We had quite a file on it. A conservator had actually looked at it and there is an extensive file on what needs to be done or should be done.

MR. MCKAY:

The car was given to the museum. There are pictures on the website of the car. It's absolutely stunning.

MR. GISH:

Now it needs total restoration.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It was off the property for a period of time at another County facility. There is a long story to it.

MR. GISH:

It was all pre-this group. We had no control over it. Anything else? How is everything going with the soda machines? Are you comfortable with the changes that were made?

MR. MCKAY:

They're off and running. We just have to get the candy machine fixed. We have to get that down to Farmingdale and get it refurbished. But as far as the soda machine – Peter said they're doing pretty well.

MR. GISH:

These were outsourced in the past. We now have them all inside. We have the machine, and we're now getting all the money from them rather than just –

MS. ANKER:

One more thing relating to the – Suffolk County offered to repair the lawn equipment. I'm sure we're going to send them a thank you letter. Are we allowed to give them maybe some complimentary tickets or we're not? I'm not sure how that works. That's awfully nice that they're working on this to help us repair the equipment.

MR. MCKAY:

He's actually a very nice guy. I actually spoke to the Commissioner, and then he handed me off to some other guy.

MR. GISH:

We're very good at that. Carol is very good at giving out tickets – whether, in fact, it's the Department of Labor that gives us free help or anyone else who comes in to offer help, we try to be generous in that regard.

MS. CAMBRIA:

I have one thing to say, and Gretchen knows. When we had our Education Committee, and I tried to get in touch with Don about this, we thought that maybe it would be a good idea when you have your gala on the 25th of September to have – there's a building, the vacant little shed right by the parking lot. It's right next to a sign.

MR. GISH:

The old tennis cabana.

MS. CAMBRIA:

It's a tiny little building. We were looking at it tonight. We were hoping that maybe for that night there could be some kind of a set up that would have brochures, signs, posters about information about the upcoming events.

MR. MCKAY:

The old bees' nest.

MS. CAMBRIA:

That would be a good spot. It would need to be –

MR. MCKAY:

I sent a letter to Allure Homebuilding begging them to consider doing a home-make over. I got no response.

MS. CAMBRIA:

This is just a tiny shed. I'm thinking just signage for that event.

MR. MCKAY:

It's clean. It needs some work.

MS. CAMBRIA:

You already have a sign up, but it's supported by cinder blocks. Along the same line if there was some kind of a sign – you know the sign that's in existence on 25 A and Little Neck Road? Something like that, that has a listing of upcoming events, the people attending on the 25th. Maybe it could be outfitted so that that was where that took place.

MS. ANKER:

Again, if that's going to be an information booth, people are dressed up and ready for dancing. I'm thinking maybe afterwards if we could have some type of party favor which includes the information, that might be a nice touch.

MR. MCKAY:

I'll buy the paint, we can paint it.

MR. HAHN:

I think what we should do is everybody that comes to the gala we should get their email address, and we can email them everything we have.

MS. CAMBRIA:

But that might be where we can do that. We can get their email address there.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Many we will have email but the ones we miss we can have someone getting those –

MR. GLASCOCK:

Maybe we can have them leave their business cards.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We could do a raffle for a annual membership.

MS. CAMBRIA:

It's just looking at the sign that's supported by the cinder block, I thought it might be more sleeker looking.

MR. GISH:

Tom.

MR. GLASCOCK:

As far as Education about the Vanderbilt Museum – I've been on the Board for about a year and a half now, almost two. I had no idea about the Chrysler car or the other car or where it was located. Certainly prior to my seeing the boathouse, I didn't know it existed

While they are not in the condition for people to visit them, I think it merits letting people know about them, having pictures and the history about it. It will generate interest in their being refurbished when monies are available and generating interest in frankly making money. I think it gives a kind of broader history about this estate.

MR. GISH:

Any of the new Board Members who would like a personal tour of all of the buildings at a time that's convenient for you, I will gladly put that together. Anybody who wants to go along with those times, I will make an announcement of the days we'll be going and let you know exactly what's on the property and what's open to the public and

what's not. Then you'll have an idea of when we have something come up, whether it happens to be the seaplane hangar or the boathouse, when we talk about the cottage or the Education Center –

MR. HAHN:

Do you know how much it would cost to replace the seaplane hangar or the boathouse?

MR. GISH:

Lots of money.

MR. BEATTIE:

They're actually funded and bonded.

MR. HAHN:

What do you mean funded and bonded?

MR. BEATTIE:

It's appropriated and bonded, and Steve Levy hasn't let DPW bid the work.

MR. MCKAY:

Same with the boathouse.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's a sore subject, but there's about \$3 million that's been approved and bonded – not bonded. There's a technical term, Lance. It's not actually bonded, but it's been approved to be bonded?

MR. REINHEIMER:

It's been appropriated but not bonded.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

But the resolution to bond it went through.

MR. REINHEIMER:

No, just appropriated.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

For the seaplane hangar and waterfront. That would have a bonding resolution included –

MR. HAHN

It was appropriated but did not make it into the Capital Budget?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's in the Capital Budget –

MR. REINHEIMER:

It's in the Capital Budget – and I'm going from memory here – when you say it was bonded –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The boathouse wasn't bonded but the rest was voted to be bonded.

MR. REINHEIMER:

It's \$2 million that was appropriated and bonded, which means we were authorized to spend the money and the bond will provide the funds. The County is not going forward with the work on the seaplane hangar. The \$2 million, in this point in time, will stabilize the building, period.

MR. HAHN:

If somebody wanted to give us the money to fix the seaplane hangar or part of the money to match the County funding, would we be allowed to -- will people actually be able to fly seaplanes out of there?

MR. MCKAY:

He parked his seaplane in there.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's not part of the restoration. The plans are not to make it into a working seaplane hangar. The plans were to right now preserve it, and then to make it into a –

MR. HAHN:

I don't have a plane, but most people who have planes tend to have a lot of money. There are a bunch of guys on Long Island, and I know a few of them, who have planes who have a lot of money. If they could fly their planes in there, that would be great.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

There was a very integral part of the project –

DR. ROGERS:

The original plan for the seaplane hangar was to convert the place for the dinosaur exhibit in there. There was a donation made for the interior of it. The Legislature chose not to follow through on that for whatever reason. I don't know if that money that is sitting there now

is still for that purpose. But that was the original intent. The work that they did on that was started and the interior for that, there was a donation made to refurbish the inside to house the dinosaur exhibit. That was the original intent.

MR. GISH:

We've gone to the County with proposals to not only move the dinosaur exhibit there but then to refurbish it into a catering facility. There's large amounts to function as a catering facility and to eliminate the tent that we have. We suggested that the –

MR. BEATTIE:

It's literally exactly 100 feet by 30 feet high water view.

MR. GISH:

It would have glass doors out to the front. Originally the \$2.1 million, when it was originally appropriated, dealt with the stabilization and restoration. But as time has gone on, ten years waiting, that money is now just for stabililzation. Remember it's parked on the sand. What you have now is a situation.

We've also broached the question with Suffolk Community College about using the facility for a marine academy. We've had ongoing discussions with numerous entities about the possibility of restoring that and possibly getting matching funds if Suffolk County could come up with something from New York State since they're educational. Maybe the County could come in and deal with the preservation end. We would preserve one of the buildings on the estate which was a seaplane hangar.

I shouldn't really say this, but I've even emailed and mailed Jimmy Buffet because he's got a seaplane. I've attempted to get him to come in and land at Jones Beach. I asked if he would come in. He's just crazy about seaplane hangars. We thought maybe he could drum up some money to possibly come in and see about restoring that and doing something as a historical venue. We could even put a seaplane hangar and have dinosaurs in there. We could have a dinosaur/seaplane restaurant. I have a whole name for it.

I will tell you that Ron and I have talked to every single catering guy on the Island, and I won't mention them here in a public forum, and I would say 10 to 12 from the biggest to the least and walked them through that facility to see whether anybody would consider coming in and using that, if we could get funding, and we just haven't been able

to do it. We have invested a lot of time and effort into trying to see what the possibilities are for income generation from that.

MR. GLASCOCK:

If we could just get Jimmy Buffet concert there, that would be great.

MR. GISH:

We even tried Billy Joel. We've gone in a number of directions in the last year.

Director's Report.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

This Sunday we have the MG Car Show, which is one of our bigger shows. It's a lot of fun. I will definitely be here, at least 12 – 3. That would be a good day, if any Trustee wants to come and see one of our big summer events and then maybe have an opportunity to go down and check out some of the other buildings. So Sunday would be a great day.

Also Gittelman's book signing was rescheduled. It was originally supposed to be tomorrow night, but Steve had to go out of town. So it's next Wednesday night. There was a big article in *Newsday* last week. We already have reservations for about 20 people. The *New York Times* is going to be having a little article this weekend about that. It should be a really nice evening. It's at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday night. We have been getting some wonderful publicity.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

Where is it going to be?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It will be in the mansion area, depending on how many people and the weather. I would love to have it in the dining room t-pool area, and if it's bigger it will be in the courtyard.

MS. ANKER:

What time is that?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

5:00 to 7:00. Steve is hoping to have some lively debate and conversation on the book. If you've had a chance to read it, it's an opportunity to quiz Steve on his interpretation. Again, it should be a lot of fun.

Our Tango Night on July 31 was very, very successful. We had over 200 people. The following week Alex Torres, we had over 300 people. We sold out that event.

MR. HAHN:

How much did those events make?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The second probably netted about \$5,000. The first one was a little bit less than that, maybe \$3,500 or \$4,000. They bring in a lot of really wonderful people who we don't get for our other programs, so we're really reaching a new audience. Every year we do it, this is the fourth year we have done Alex Torres. The first year I think we had 80 people, and now we're up to a full house and we'll charge more next year. People had the opportunity to be in the courtyard. It's a magical place.

We're doing Tango Night again on September 11. We already have 60 people signed up for that one. We're getting a little bit of a nitch. Latin Music in the summer, in the Spanish courtyard, it's just such an appropriate place. It's very magical. I thank Don, who was there setting up tables and chairs. Thank you so much for helping us.

MR. GISH:

We also have dance groups that are coming in that are actually teaching. It's a great venue for them to come in.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's part of our mutli-culture evening of music and dance. Next summer we're going to be doing a lot more of that.

MR. GISH:

Just to let you know, we could charge more, but we have limits on the number of people that can get into the courtyard. That's a fire element. Could we get 500 in there? No, but we will sell it out when we reach the level that we can. There's a finite element to that.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Then I hope you all received your gala or Centennial Celebration invitation. It's a fundraiser on September 25. The invitations have gone out to many, many people. We did a blast. We have another wave that will be going out in a week. We got our first responses today. We got a donation from a Rowing Club. Two tickets were purchased. We're on the way.

I had gone to the seaplane hangar with them. They wanted the seaplane hangar, but that's another story.

Hopefully the blast you got, you'll forward it to your friends. It is also live on our website. People can purchase tickets through there. I have extra invitations, so if anybody wants to take one or two to address to your friends, that would be great.

Again, it is a value evening. It's \$100 for open bar, top shelf liquor, live sextet band. They play at Birdland in the City. It's jazz and swing. We'll have really good dancing and food for four hours at the most beautiful place on the North Shore. You can do that for \$100 anywhere. We'll have other opportunities to help support the museum while you're there with silent auctions and things like that.

We also have a sponsorship letter appeal, so if you know of any companies, or businesses or even any individuals who you think might want to be a sponsor – we're not doing a big expensive journal, but we will do an in-house program. We're going to promote your company in the dome. There are other things that we can promote because we have this wonderful facility.

We have a lot of people working on this. We don't have a special events department, so when we do something like this, we're pulling from all different departments, from our developing and our part-time people. Elizabeth is our grant writer, but she is also working very hard on this. Pat, who is our PR and communications person, is working on this also. I'm working on this. As we get closer, every employee on the property will be involved in this endeavor.

We hope to make this the most successful event that we've had in a very long time. We can't do it alone. If you come here and take some sponsorship letters or invitations, that would be great. We're very excited about this event. It should be a lot of fun.

MR. GISH:

We're honoring Jon Cooper from Huntington. He has been a big supporter for a long period of time, through good times and bad. He was one of the people who sponsored the Hotel/Motel Tax and some of the bail-out funds when we really needed it. We'd like to take this opportunity – and we try not to be political – but as he's reached the end of his tenure, we think it's a good opportunity for us to sort of step up and do that.

MS. ANKER:

Can I ask a question? Would it be improper to invite other types of celebrities to come to this, since this is a very important event?

MR. GISH:

Please take as many invitations as you want.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Obviously, we're located in Huntington, but we are a Suffolk County/Long Island wide institution. We have gotten support from all across Long Island, and I think *Business News* and other people from outside our local area might be happy to support us.

Any lists you might want – if you don't want to send it out yourself, if you email your list to me for either blasting or hard copies, I will be happy to do that. We have actually hard mailed to the Huntington Chamber. We've mailed to the Melville Chamber. We belong to those two chambers. But there's no reason why chambers way out east might not be a good venue for us to go. Any contacts you have would be appreciated.

MR. GISH:

And think about contacting your local Legislator who appointed you to this position asking them to come. Make it a personal invitation, if you have the ability to sponsor them, do so. We're looking here to let the Legislature know what we're doing, and this is a good time to let them have a good time. There will be a great band. We're working it up to be a great evening. Do whatever you can to do that.

MS. ANKER:

What's our limit?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We can accommodate 256 people. If we were to go significantly over that, we could rent another tent. If we get to 500, we will just do that.

MR. GISH:

Do we need a resolution on the cell tower?

MR. BEATTIE:

I don't know if we need one but it wouldn't be a bad idea.

MR. GISH:

I think it would be good. The cell tower has been an ongoing process for almost a year. We had the RFPs that we're doing. I think June 25 was the date that they were due. We met with County officials and members of the Budget Review Office. We have met with estimators. We have met with the Department of Technology, as I mentioned, and also DPW. We met with the Executive Board. We believe we have made a choice for a provider for the cell tower.

The proposed cell tower provider is Suffolk Wireless. We believe we have chosen the company that is going to be the best technical group. They are locally based and will give us the most revenue long-term, over a 29 year, 9 month period with some upfront money that will occur once we get a building permit and then an additional amount of money, \$100,000, once they get a certificate of occupancy. There is some upfront money, which we'll be able to get at that stage of the game. Did I say something wrong?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Maybe we shouldn't get into detail before we sign the contract.

MR. GISH:

I'd like to get a motion that we follow the recommendations of the Cell Tower Committee to approve the contract with Suffolk Wireless for the construction of the cell tower at the Vanderbilt.

MR. HAHN:

I'm going to vote yes for this, but I just want to say for future items such as this, that there probably should be a memo that's distributed to the Board, so that we have something in front of us that outlines the details of this. I don't want to slow this process down anymore than it's already been slowed down, but I think that that's good governance.

MR. GISH:

I'll be honest with you. My strategy has normally been to try to operate a committee and get those individuals who are interested in any particular element relating to the Vanderbilt to operate and get all the details squared away in committee.

In the past some of these meetings were four or five hours before the Board Meeting.

MR. HAHN:

I mean a memo beforehand, one page with details of the contract to every member of the Board. It shouldn't make the meeting go longer, especially if it was given to us a week before the meeting and we could ask questions prior.

MR. GISH:

The meeting we had was on Tuesday, yesterday, so that would not have been possible. But your point is taken, and I will make an attempt to do that on any of the issues.

MR. GLASCOCK:

Just to reinforce the procedure. I'd love to make the nomination, but candidly somebody that's on the committee shouldn't probably make the nomination. It should be someone else, but if there was someone else like me, I'd be making a nomination on something that I really don't know the facts about. I think that's an excellent point.

MR. GISH:

Point taken. Would you rather have me get the memo out to you concerning the particulars on that and then take a vote either through the phone or internet?

MR. HAHN:

I don't think Public Meeting Laws will allow us to take a vote over the phone. I don't want to slow down the process because the museum does need the revenue. I trust that the committee made a wise investigation into the options available to the museum.

I'm just saying as far as governance, we should just put our ducks in a row and each committee person should know what they're voting on rather than us just willy nilly having a motion on things.

We might not even need to have a motion on this. I suspect we do, because it's a disposition of property here. We're going to be disposing of property on the grounds. We're going to be entering into a 29 year lease. That's a disposition of property – anything over three years is a disposition of property. We are giving away property of the museum for non-public use over that time period.

Granted there's a benefit to the museum for it. So it probably does need to be voted on. I don't want to hold this up. I'm going to vote yes for it, but I think in the future, that's really the way we should operate.

MR. GISH:

We attempted to make sure that everybody was involved in this, from the Department of Information and Technology, to DPW, where we got their input, all the way down the line to –

MR. HAHN:

We don't really know what happened, though. I'm sure it's all great, and I'm going to vote yes. I'm just saying the process or procedure – cover your ass, so that somebody who sues us that didn't get this contract could – and believe me, people do sue when they don't get contracts. I have been involved with many of those lawsuits in my career, and I'm sure you have, as well, especially when it's a public contract. People do sue. We need to have –

MR. GLASCOCK:

Is there an exclusivity clause that – meaning only they can have a cell tower here?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's a company – what is it called? It's not a provider. It's not a single provider. It's a company –

MR. GISH:

And they have the options for the number of cell towers, should they choose to do this.

MR. GLASCOCK:

So they probably have an exclusivity clause in there. Then they can basically sub-let to whoever they want.

MR. GISH:

That's how we hope to generate the funds.

MR. BEATTIE:

Do you think it would be helpful for the group just to go through some of the main criteria that we used to make our decision so that the Board has a comfort factor? Do you have anything with you?

MR. GISH:

I have the one from yesterday. Okay, maybe I could do it this way. When we met with the Department of Information and Technology, we asked them to review seven proposals that initially came in June 25. We got them together just to review this. The money revenue part was

not in the picture. We did not review revenue at all until all the technical aspects of all the proposals were reviewed. We rated them.

Gretchen, Ron, Michael, Carol, Don and myself were there for that meeting. We rated them based on what we thought were the technical aspects, how they answered the RFP. We listened to Donna Cumella, who was with the Department of Information and Technology, on what she thought was a good or bad answer and what we should be aware of.

The answer in this case was, no, they were not going to abide by the Suffolk County Living Wage. We eliminate that one. If you were not willing to abide by the Suffolk County Living Wage, that person, I will tell you off the bat, was eliminated. We then went down to DPW who, in fact, they thought made the best recommendation for the construction. The answers that DPW gave us made sense.

We actually rated them. Some people were rated A through F. Some people did pretty good, using smiley faces and sad faces. But we actually, between DPW and Information Technology, came down to two individuals that we thought technically rated the best. We also felt that there were two that had dealt with the storage sites before, that had dealt with local municipalities, and had handled that well. Carol checked the references that they gave and also went beyond that and checked –

MR. BEATTIE:

And they were Long Island firms.

MR. GISH:

That was one of the elements we felt was a condition. We had out-of-state firms who had applied. Some of the information that was supplied to us by DPW said they may not be familiar with our ability, so therefore the process would be slowed down.

MR. HAHN:

Who is responsible for getting the building permits, us or them?

MR. GISH:

They get them. Once we grant them, they have to go through the SEQRA. They have to indeed get all the permits. That was one of the considerations also. Who seemed to be doing it the most in Suffolk County? Who had the ease in facilities? Who did the County have the least trouble with in the construction? Somebody that tried to get

around the County one time before, that was explained at the meeting. We listened to that explanation. Then that became part of the evaluation.

We then went to the BRO and Robert Lipp, who sat down with Carol and myself, and we reviewed the two proposals that we had gone through on the technical aspects. We reviewed them based on what the percentages were and whether there was upfront money initially.

There was Plan A, B, C, and D for the providers. Some provided three individuals AT&T, Sprint, or whatever, some going as high as seven, and we tried to assess what company would give us the best long-term or the best money. We actually evaluated that.

We then had an Executive Board meeting yesterday in which we looked at the two proposals that Carol and I got from BRO. We assessed it based on what we thought our needs would be. They were to take all the money upfront and take nothing for the next 30 years, and then we could do what we wanted to do with the money, or we would spread that money out over a 30 year period and allow other Presidents and Board of Trustees to have an ongoing revenue stream that would come in that wouldn't be spent by –

MR. HAHN:

I just think in business 30 years is a long time.

MR. GISH:

We actually thought about that, but we made our choices of the companies based on what we thought was the best way to go. The easiest way to go would be to take the money upfront and make ourselves look good, but obviously – it's the same thing with Lotto. Do you want to take it over 20 years or take the cash upfront?

There was a considerable difference between whether we took money upfront. I will give it to you very, very quickly. This is going to be – I guess I can't do this here. The one guaranteed three carriers, which meant that even if they don't get three, we would still get the revenue from three. That was one of the considerations.

MR. BEATTIE:

That's why we went with the guaranteed three. If we get more, great.

MR. GLASCOCK:

How many did you receive all together?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

There were seven proposals. There were two that received A or A+ ratings that were clearly ahead. Then we opened up the bids – this wasn't a bidding process. This was an RFP process, but we opened up the proposals for the monetary compensation. It just so happened that we were very lucky that the two A people were by far the most superior. At that point, we did the references and the analysis.

MR. GLASCOCK:

If the resolution was passed, the next step would be to contact the County Attorney to start working on the –

MR. GISH:

The licensing agreement has to be worked out by the County. The County has to have the licensing agreement, and that's going to be in their hands after that. We made the choice based on what we think is the best, including the County in every decision. But we think we've done what's best for the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium.

MR. GLASCOCK:

I'd like to make a motion to accept this proposal.

MS. ANKER:

Second.

MR. GISH:

Any questions?

MS. ANKER:

I just wanted to comment. Before I was on the School Board at Mt. Sinai and we had the issue of a cell tower in our area. It was a 30 year contract.

MR. GISH:

All of them are 29 years and nine months. All of them increased revenue by 3 percent a year. There was no change in that across the board. There has to be some industry standard that they go by. There has to be something with that 29 year, 9 month thing. There must be a technical aspect they're working through.

MR. GISH:

All in favor? Opposed? **(Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Bottomley, Dr. Gittelman & Mr. Peterman. One vacant position.)**

Any old business? Any new business? Ron?

MR. BEATTIE:

The Staff and Volunteer Appreciation Barbeque, it's that time again.

MR. GISH:

September 27 is a Monday. The museum is closed on Monday. Last year was our first Staff and Volunteer Appreciation Day. I will send the memo out to everyone to tell you exactly what we're doing and the date and time, which is between 3:00 and 6:00.

What we do is try to collect money from the Board of Trustees and we make hot dogs and hamburgers. Herb makes clam chowder. We have corn on the cob and salad. We invite our volunteer gardeners, John and his master gardeners come. We invite the Centerport Garden Club, who will come and volunteer their time here. All the staff is invited, part-timers, full-timers and their wives and significant others to come in on that day.

It doesn't come out of County funds. It doesn't come out of our operating funds. Last year we paid, based on the Trustees. I'd like to try that again today. Ron was very nice to remind me of doing that. I think we settled on a fee of \$40, unless someone violently opposes that. Can I get a motion that we collect \$40 from each of the Trustees? People who are not here will get a nasty note from me tonight.

We will have a wonderful day. Everybody is invited. The Board of Trustees does all the operations. None of the staff are involved. They just come, and we serve them as we did last year. Is that okay with everyone? Do we need a motion on that?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I don't think you need a motion.

MR. GISH:

It's a unanimous decision. So the date is September 27. It's a Monday between 3:00 and 6:00.

MR. BEATTIE:

And, obviously, we'd like to have as many Board Members come to it so that the staff who hasn't gotten a raise in years and our volunteers who certainly don't get raises know that we all appreciate them. Last

year it was a lot of fun. Sarah was there, Don was there, I was there, Gretchen –

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

Herb.

MR. BEATTIE:

Noel was here. Herb made the clam chowder. Please make an attempt to show up.

MR. HAHN:

I've known Herb for 25 years and I've never had his clam chowder --

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

Well, that's how secret this recipe is.

MR. BEATTIE:

What happened was Noel made it, but everybody thought for some reason – I guess because he was ladling it out, that Herb made it.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

No, Herb kept saying that he made it.

MR. GISH:

Anything else? Can I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. MCKAY:

Motion.

MS. OLDRIN MONES:

Second.

MR. GISH:

All in favor? Opposed? **(Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Bottomley, Dr. Gittelman & Mr. Peterman. One vacant position.)**

(Noel Gish adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.)

NG: ap
Attachments