

**VMHA CORPORATION
Annual Meeting of the Members
October 1, 2024**

I. Call to Order

Chair Pro Tem Austin Love called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Chair Pro Tem Austin Love
Member Alan Sorum
Member Sharon Scheidt
Member Jimmy Devens
Member Olivia Foster
Member Joseph Lally

Excused: 1 - Chair Dennis Fleming
Also Present: VMHA Interim Executive Director Faith Revell
City Clerk Sheri Pierce
City Manager John Douglas

III. Consent Agenda- Approval of Minutes from October 3, 2023

MOTION: Member Foster moved, seconded by Member Scheidt, to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2023 Annual Meeting.

VOTE ON MOTION

Yays: 6 - Love, Sorum, Scheidt, Devens, Foster and Lally

Absent: 1 - Fleming

MOTION CARRIED.

IV. Annual Reports

Faith Revell, Interim Executive Director and Curator of Education and Public Programs, shared a land acknowledgement honoring the Sugpiaq people and all other indigenous groups with ties to Valdez and Prince William Sound.

1. VMHA President's Report

VMHA President Gary Minish provided a report on the state of the museum, highlighting positive outcomes over the year despite challenges caused by the prior Executive Director's departure and a several month closure to overhaul the Museum building's HVAC system.

He thanked Interim Executive Director Faith Revell, the board and the staff for their hard work over the year and noted that the organization had stayed within budget and that programming levels were maintained despite the closure.

Minish gave an update on the executive director search process and thanked the members for their support.

2. Committee Reports

VMHA Secretary Michelle Cullen echoed the comments on the efforts of the board and provided updates on the following committees:

- Executive Director Search Committee – Secretary Cullen noted that the committee had been meeting weekly to recruit candidates for the executive director position and working with museum and non-profit professionals to find the right candidate.
- Native Gallery Committee – Secretary Cullen shared that the committee was active for the first time in many years and building positive relationships with the Valdez Native Tribe. She shared that elders would be invited to do work at the museum on the Native Gallery and encouraged any Valdez Native Tribe members to get involved with the board.
- Collections Committee – Secretary Cullen described the ongoing work of the committee, led by Chair Rich Dunkin, to identify items for accessioning and deaccessioning. She highlighted the efforts to update collections policies and noted that limitations on space were a challenge.
- Fundraising Committee – Secretary Cullen shared that annual fundraising efforts had included appeal letters, raffle ticket sales and the fall Road House Dinner. She gave details about the upcoming Road House Dinner and invited the members to attend.

3. Staff Report – Executive Director

Interim Executive Director Faith Revell thanked the board and staff for their hard work and shared highlights of the past year.

She described the challenges of the closure during the HVAC replacement and learning a new role. She put emphasis on ongoing space limitations and the specific need for replacement of concrete on the outdoor pavilion.

She expounded on opportunities in the form of new grants and funding streams, refreshing of the galleries and continued community support. She shared about the overall positivity of the year reiterating the impact of the staff, board, members, city, volunteers, local donors and visitors.

4. Staff Report – Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Caren Oberg provided a report highlighting the collections and exhibitions over the past year and looking forward to 2025.

Oberg reported that the number of objects acquisitioned in 2024 was sustainable for the collection and allowed adequate time for staff research of items. She shared that the Collections Committee had been asked to focus on new ways in which objects in the collection could tell the story of Valdez.

Oberg highlighted that additional attention was now being paid to items already in the collection and shared specifics about the upcoming work to be done on the Alaska Native Collection due to changes in the federal Native American graves Protection and Repatriation Act. She spoke about funding available from a state museum grant to be used to collaborate with local elders to interpret and identify objects in the collection and noted that the museum would prioritize continuation of the work after the expiration of grant funding.

The cultural context created by the three rotating exhibitions in 2024 was described in detail, as was the overall impact of the HVAC project on enhancing the galleries and refreshing the museum space overall. Oberg praised an overall sense of respect for the collection by museum staff, board members and city staff managing the project throughout the construction.

5. Staff Report – Curator of Education and Public Programs

Faith Revell, in her role as Curator of Education and Public Programs, shared highlights from museum programming in 2024, noting that, despite creating limitations, the construction project had been an unexpected opportunity to connect with new people and build relationships in the community.

Revell explained that the goal of museum programming was to foster an understanding of the place we call home and to create multifaceted experiences for all ages. She shared highlights from the year including:

- The seventh-grade kayaking field trip to Old Town.
- Collaboration with the Valdez Native Tribe on a class exploring medicinal uses of local plants.
- Numerous art classes, including an exploration of indigenous canoe building technology with a visiting Tlingit artist.
- Elementary school students exploring the galleries and completing scavenger hunts on field trips.
- A visit from Prince William Sound College's Introduction to Physical Geography students.
- Expansion of guided tours in partnership with Alaska Premier Tours, which created opportunities for visitors to explore history in context of local geography.

Revell shared that educational experiences were typically designed to parallel museum exhibits. She added that the closure and her current dual role adversely impacted the amount of programming in 2024.

6. Financial Report and 2025 Operating Budget Request

Executive Director Faith Revell presented on the museum's financial position noting a general positive trajectory in assets. She summarized the budget versus actuals through September 2024, noting that most revenue came in during the summer months and many expenses were not paid until the fourth quarter.

Revell highlighted that most revenue was in the form of grants, with earned revenue being a distant second, and gave an overview of fund development activities. The increase in cruise ship activity in 2024 was the main driver of increases in earned revenue and it was reported that admissions were up by roughly 3,000 individuals.

Revell spoke to expenses and highlighted that personnel were the main expense, followed by liability insurance and utilities. She noted that personnel costs were lower in 2024 due to her having dual roles, but they would increase again once a new executive director was hired. She noted that expenses consistently exceeded revenue earned in the first and fourth quarters of each year.

Chair Pro Tem Love asked that financial information from the prior two years be provided during the upcoming budget work session to allow a side-by-side comparison.

Revell provided estimates for the upcoming 2025 budget highlighting the projections driving anticipated future revenues and expenditures. She predicted the following:

For revenues in 2025:

- Non-city grants, State of Alaska grants and community foundation grants were expected to be stable.
- Fund development income was expected to be stable.
- Bulk admission fees were expected to grow due to additional cruise ships.
- Presenter and guide income was expected to grow, also due to increased tourism.
- Store sales were expected to be stable.

For expenses in 2025:

- Personnel costs were expected to increase with hiring of a new executive director and additional seasonal staff.
- Health insurance costs were expected to increase significantly.
- Utility costs were difficult to predict with the installation of the new HVAC system.

Chair Pro Tem Love asked about plans for covering the cost of additional seasonal staff since no increase to the City of Valdez grant was being requested. Executive Director Revell noted that the additional cost would be absorbed due to increases in bulk admissions. Love asked about the possibility of increasing bulk admission fees, Revell noted that the fees had been stable for several years with the goal of making group museum visits affordable.

Revell concluded by sharing additional slides to highlight the museum's year in pictures and by thanking the members for their support.

V. Old Business- New Museum Planning Update

Executive Director Revell highlighted the continued goal of having an adequate space for the collection and shared support for eventual construction of a new museum facility.

VI. New Business

VII. Public Business from the Floor

VIII. Member Business from the Floor

Corporation members thanked the board of directors and staff at the museum for their hard work and thoughtful reports. They complimented the quality of programming and overall positive impact the museum had on the community.

IX. Adjourn

Chair Pro Tem Love adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.