

MINUTES

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MEETINGS

March 17th, 2021
9:00am

DRAFT

PRESENT

Trustees

Ray LaHood, Chair

Steve Beckett

Joan Brodsky

Jessica Harris

Kathryn Harris

Gary Johnson

Melinda Spitzer Johnston

Jason Lesniewicz

Dan Monroe

Martin Sandoval

Eunice Santos (absent)

Guests

Erin Mast, ALPLF CEO

Staff

Melissa Coultas, Chief of staff, Acting Executive Director, Interim Human Resources Director

Toby Trimmer, Chief Operating Officer

Dave Kelm, General Counsel, Ethics Officer, FOIA Officer

Hannah Ross, Executive Assistant

Brett Cox, Chief Financial Officer,

Chris Wills, Communications Director

PUBLIC COMMENT

CONSENT ITEMS

Minutes from February 17, 2021, Public Meeting.

Trustee Jason Lesniewicz made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2021, public meeting. Trustee Kathryn Harris seconded the motion. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

Chairman Report

Trustee Dan Monroe reported that Christian and Jake, the staff historians, have found four individuals with impeccable credentials to come and examine the artifacts. Trustee Monroe spoke to Erin Mast recently about the Foundation preparing an N.D.A for the experts to sign to protect them on inquiries they might get on why they are doing their work. Mast will schedule the expert's visits. At the end of this process, Mast pledged to have a press conference to describe the investigation and how scholars go about a provenance type of investigation of artifacts. Christian and Jake will receive the report from the experts so they can update their records. The Foundation will provide all the money spent on this investigation.

Mast explains they will be scheduling a provenance committee meeting soon to talk about the four finalists and confirm if they will move on with 3 or 4 experts. She appreciates Christian and Jake finding these experts and is excited to work with them. The process itself is an important part of this story. They are responsible for sharing the process the Foundation went through once they have the conclusion of the process and what the experts learn during their investigation.

Kelm explained that since the Foundation has taken it upon themselves to pay the full cost for the experts to come, the Foundation will have the agreement with the experts. Since the Foundation is a private foundation, they can have a stand-alone agreement. The issues remaining on the stateside for the provenance committee are when they meet, that meeting will be subjected to the OMA. All we can do on the stateside is control what we can, and the Foundation will control the part of the provenance examination of the hat.

Trustee Monroe appreciates Mast's professionalism and happy she is the Foundation's head and thinks she will have a great partnership with this board and Christina Shutt. Trustee Monroe also noted that Erin assured him that the investigation would be done professionally, and the results will be publicly announced at a press conference. He feels confident that is going to happen.

Foundation Update

The Foundation is in the final stages of preparing for the Lincoln Leadership Award this year, which will be virtual. Mast invited Christina Shutt to join the Foundation as their guest to this event, and she accepted. The footage they have captured for the event will be helpful for years to come, and they did a segment on our collections with Christian and Kathryn Harris.

The No Malice project is going well and has been an important and responsive program that they have been able to leverage so many foundation friends and partners across the state. Mast is happy to see this project get mentioned in different venues, including Mayor Lightfoot's newsletter.

The Foundation is looking forward to opening the State of Sound exhibit. They have also been looking at the P.A.L project. ALPLM explained the hiring issues it was having, and now the Foundation is committed to finding a solution to that issue because it's an important project with deadlines coming up.

Trustee Johnson asked Mast to explain her vision of the nature of the relationship in the future between the two organizations. Chairman LaHood suggested we schedule that discussion at the next board meeting. Mast noted that she has been spending time talking to supporters, community members, and community leaders to understand how they view our partnership.

Update on MOU

Kelm explained there are ongoing negotiations with the Foundation's attorneys, and late Monday afternoon, they finally received their edits to the ALPLM's draft MOU. There is continued hope to finish up the MOU by the 31st of this month.

Trustee Brodsky expressed that she believes the board cannot agree to the MOU until they receive the Foundations 9 90. She also noted that the Foundation head gets paid 100k more than we will pay Christina. Chairman LaHood suggests Joan and Dave get together to express whatever concerns she has and whatever paperwork she thinks Dave needs.

Executive Director Report

Coultas thanked members for all their work during the search process. Executive staff have had good conversations with Christina and will continue to keep her updated on the ongoing of the agency.

In the last week, the agency sat for its first appropriations hearing in the house. Brett Cox, Melissa Coultas, and Kayla Sorensen participated in that hearing. The hearing went well, and questions were primarily related to cost-saving measures especially relating to COVID and moving forward. There were standard questions asked about our diversity efforts, and we were happy to report our collaboration with our D.E.I consultant. Our biggest D.E.I effort we have made is establishing an internal D.E.I committee that meets regularly.

An ongoing project is our security camera upgrade that is halfway done. We are replacing every security camera in the facility, and C.D.B funds this project.

Lastly, since January 2020, the staff has provided the board with comprehensive board reports at every board meeting. Executive team thinks it makes more sense to send brief board updates once a week as opposed to a 10-20-page document every month.

Chief Operating Officer Report

The ALPLM has had some challenges with our two theaters, with our computer systems failing in the Ghost theater and mechanical difficulties in Union theater. The ALPLM is 15 years old, so we are due for upgrades, and we have been working with our finance department to fix these issues.

The State of Sound is coming along with a built-in studio in the exhibit. This allows us to do podcasting and invite radio stations to host their broadcast in our exhibit.

The last month has been challenging for the administration team, but we are very excited to have Christina come. During this transition, Dave and Melissa's leadership has been tremendous, and they are two stabilizing figures in our institution.

Chief Legal Officer Report

The ALPLM had one FOIA request this month regarding the Emancipation Group Monument in Boston about a Lincoln monument that was moved. This monument was designed, erected, and paid for by people of color and former enslaved people. We are not sure about the individual's interest but was able to give him what he needed within the five-day period.

An update on closed session minutes, want to thank Hannah Ross for listening to hours of closed minutes and transcribing them. The closed minutes are going to be packaged up and provided to the board electronically with a password protected system. The board will discuss at the next meeting to decide to leave those minutes closed or release them to the public.

Chief Fiscal Officer Report

A day or two after our last board meeting, the Governor presented his annual budget address to the General Assembly. The ALPLM's budget for this FY that starts June 1 is contained in HB2675 and SB451. Our budget is being held flat to what we have this year, which will be okay, but we will continue to watch what we are doing and not create new expansions to programs or any new large initiatives.

The current FY 2021 through the end of February, ALPLM revenue on the stateside was down 73% compared to last year. Direct support revenue is down 90%, and by the end of this FY, we are projecting we will have lost 2.6 million dollars worth of income.

An overview of how Brett has segregated funding sources that involve the Foundation is direct support, the membership program that the ALPLM doesn't receive any money from, fundraising, and grants. Fundraising and grants are an area where the ALPLM could have long term financial success.

Cox has continued his efforts to understand how the finances work on the fundraising side but haven't had a lot of success getting a meeting or information from the Foundation. Since Brett couldn't get information from our Foundation, he looked through the I.R.S. 995s and got information from the different programs we have done regarding the financial support they have received from the Foundation.

Heavily qualifying that Brett did ask the Foundation how much they provided financial support to the ALPLM over the last three years. Still, the Foundation did not wish to share that information, so he is sure there probably are some gaps in his information. 2% of our actual spending over the last three years comes from the Foundations fundraising efforts. All the funds raised by the Foundation about 7 cents on every dollar they raise goes directly to support the ALPLM. From what Brett could account for in terms of dollar amount, it looks like the Foundation provides about 167k in support on an annual basis to our institution, and 103k of that is the matched donations for the P.A.L. project. He also looked at the financial support the ALPLM provides to the Foundation in terms of office space, parking, staff time, rental space, and other stuff like that, which came out to be 87k dollars' worth of services to the Foundation a year. Again, Brett could not get the information directly from the Foundation, so there is probably more support they provide to us that they allude to. From what he could come up with, the ALPLM is 80k a year net benefited from the fundraising efforts by our Foundation. On the Brightside, Erin is here and assured us that she hears us, and Christina is coming. He hopes that this understanding will be reflected in the new M.O.U. that encourages collaboration and payment of shared goals with our Foundation.

Trustee Brodsky asked why the Foundation gets all the membership fees? Kelm explained that in our statute, it mandates that if there is a joint membership program between the Foundation and ALPLM, the proceeds may be used for the benefit of the agency at the Foundations discretion, and to change that, they would have to change the law.

Trustee Sandoval asked if there is a tracking system on major systems when you expect to replace a capital needs perspective? Coultas explained that before Brett coming to the ALPLM, there wasn't a capital system. They have been working together with their program area and the agency to develop a plan related to the I.T. part of the theaters and all the agency's electronic equipment. The theaters are inspected every year done by a rigging company out of Chicago, so every year, they sit down and triage what is the most critical, what we have funding for, or what we need to ask for. We do provide a 5-year capital plan to GOMB and the capital development board. Chairman LaHood asked Coultas to provide the board members with the 5-year capital plan.

We are not considered a small business or a nonprofit, so we often don't qualify for types of grants like the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program.

Public Information Officer

Director Shutt has proved to be excellent in dealing with the press and is a natural in interviews. Wills provided the board with a more detailed report, but there was a lot of Springfield area interest from T.V. to radio and newspapers, which gave her a solid first impression in the community. WJB did a lengthy interview, so that got us in the Chicago community as well. When it gets closer to her start date, we can generate more stories, possibly some national interest having the first African American director here at the ALPLM to bring some new perspectives and ideas to the institution. Chicago Tribune did a story about a project in the city of Chicago where they are reviewing many public statues and monument several involving Lincoln and our staff Historian Jake Friefeld was quoted prominently in that story. Yesterday talked to the SJR about some of the financial matters Brett discussed.

Trustee Kathryn Harris made a motion to adjourn meeting. Trustee Joan Brodsky seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54am