

**Minutes of the Louisville Zoo Foundation Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 22 August 2023**  
**6:00p.m. African Outpost**

Members of the Louisville Zoo Foundation Board met at 6:00p.m. on 22 August 2023, in person with members present as follows:

Quorum Present: Julie Babbage, Cleo Battle, Tom Halbleib, Chris Jones, Deborah King, Kate Loyd, Jeff Nally, Steve Paziienza, Becky Phillips (Chair), Leigh Pittman, Cory Skolnick, Linda Speed, Jessica Thompson, Dave Tummonds (Vice Chair), Pattie Dale Tye, Louis Waterman

Emeritus Members: Sophie Call, Chad Dobbins, Dan Maloney

Staff Present: Kim Allgeier, Margue Esrock (Recorder), Ron Evans, Kelly Grether, Zoli Gyimesi, Robert Kemnitz, Stephanie Moore, Linda Smith, Steve Taylor

Guests: Elizabeth Knuppel, Adrienne Taylor, Sally Leyman

**I. Welcome – Becky Phillips, Chair**

Ms. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

**II. Conservation Moment – Steve Taylor**

Steve Taylor reported the zoo will bring koala bears in 2024. The San Diego Koala Care Manager visited the zoo and loved the facility. The zoo has not had koalas since 2000.

A cassowary will be placed in the Australia exhibit area.

**III. Chair’s Report – Becky Phillips**

**a. Approval of 27 June 2023 Minutes – Becky Phillips**

The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**b. Foundation Award**

Ron Evans presented Zookeeper III, Sylvia Zirkelbach, with the Foundation Award. Sylvia holds an unprecedented record of 40 years straight as a dedicated keeper at the Louisville Zoo. She could have embraced early retirement years ago, yet she chose to remain committed for her team and the animals. She has played a pivotal role as the go-to expert for numerous hand-reared giraffes, spearheaded innovative woolly monkey blood pressure training, and consistently guides her department through her strong work ethic and personal integrity. Sylvia is a true leader.

Steve Taylor recognized two SSA workers, Fantasy and Lisa, for discovering a Crown Crane after hours that had gotten out of its enclosure. They contacted the bird department and stayed with the bird until keepers arrived.

**c. BEE Plans to Onboard New Board Members**

Leigh Pittman shared plans for onboarding new Board members. New members will come in twice a year as co-hort. Each new member will be paired with a current Board member “buddy”. This person will serve as a mentor. The new member packet will be revised.

**IV. Skystone Partners Feasibility Study Report**

Elizabeth Knuppel, Skystone Partners Principle, presented results from the Kentucky Trails Feasibility Study to the Board. The full feasibility study was handed out or sent out electronically to all Board members.

Several key points:

- The feasibility study tests key factors to find out if the capital campaign is feasible.
- This study determined the zoo could support a \$40 million capital campaign over a 3-year period.
- A chart of gifts needed to attain this goal is included in the report.
- The sentiment is there, for a zoo capital campaign.
- Better donor relationship is needed.
- Development staff is key. Additional Development staff is critically needed.
- The timeline for the capital campaign was presented.

Chair Becky Phillips made a motion for the Foundation Board to accept this Feasibility Study Report. Kate Loyd seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

**V. Director’s Report – Dan Maloney**

**a. Fiscal Year 2023 Recap**

Dan Maloney reported FY23 was a positive year for the zoo.

- It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> best attendance in zoo history.
- The parking lot was resurfaced and striped.
- The zoo sign at the front entrance is lit and visible at night.
- The front entrance is getting a refresh.
- The front billboard had 3 rotating signs throughout the year.
- The new red panda was extremely popular in person and in the gift shop.
- The Backstage Pass was added for additional guest experiences.
- Guest Service employees continue to step up to serve our guests.
- The Zoo Youth Board recently donated \$5,000 from their fundraising activities.
- Dan expressed gratitude for the Mayor Greenberg and Sophie Call’s support.

## **VI. Finance Committee – Chris Jones**

### **HB1 Line Item**

The \$10 million from the state is now with Baird. Metro Louisville has placed the matching \$5 million on the books.

### **Attendance**

July attendance of 95,616 was 35.9% ahead of the prior year attendance of 70,373 and just below the projected attendance of 97,300. The debut of the red panda at the Zoo helped welcome additional guests and while they were at the Zoo they spent well. July 2023 surpassed our prior year revenue by 42.9% and our projected revenue by 18.8%. Operational revenue (other in park earned revenue) was 45% ahead of the prior year's revenue. Areas with guest engagement, such as animal feeding, encounters, and came rides led the way to this increase.

### **Expenses**

Expenses for the month of July include some expenses that may be accrued back to FY23. Personnel, the Zoo's largest expense was below both the prior year and projected expense by 1.0% and 6.5%, respectively. Contractual expenses are still under review for potential accruals as there is a large increase in this expense category over the prior year and our projected expense.

The month of July shows a promising start to the year with an estimated surplus of \$71,705 versus a deficit of \$198,866 in the prior year.

### **Louisville Zoo Foundation:**

All funds are either in checking accounts, money market accounts or invested with Baird Trust. Interest earned from Republic checking and money market accounts was \$2,069.98

## **I. Funding & Development – Debbie King**

Ms. King reported the Zoo's Culture fund for employee appreciation, has a balance of \$2900. Ms. King made a motion to transfer \$8,000 from unrestricted funds into the designated Culture fund. Dave Tummonds seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Ms. King reported the Director's Discretionary fund had a low balance. Ms. King made a motion to transfer \$10,000 from unrestricted funds into the designated Director's Discretionary fund. Becky Phillips seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Ms. King reported the Zoo will be able to keep all surplus plus sponsorship monies in FY24 up to \$2 million.

The next Breakfast at the Zoo for Board Members is September 6 at 7:45am. The topic will be Helen, the west lowland gorilla.

### **Exhibits and Facilities – Steve Paziienza**

Project Updates:

- The Meta Zoo bungalow office space is in construction. The estimated completion is March or April 2024.
- The parking lot has been repaved and restriped. Sean Woods was able to save \$200,000 on the parking lot by using a different vendor.
- Metro Fleet sent over a street sweeper under a 1 year contract to use in the parking lot and on zoo paths.

Deferred Maintenance Chart shows projects continuously coming on and rotating off as they are completed.

## **II. CEC Report – Jessica Thompson**

Ms. Thompson reported four Zookeeper projects were awarded CARE Grants from the committee.

- Stephanie McNally – giraffes
- Andrew Scoggan – gorillas
- Craig Michel – vultures
- Sierra Lewis – sloth

This year's summer camp had 360 kids in attendance. There was a 100% positive survey response from parents. Future Healers Got Zoo Buddies had a weeklong camp. Board member Dr. Erica Tolar participated with the campers.

38 black footed ferret kits were born at the zoo this year. The AZA Black Footed Ferret program released a total of 800 kits back into the wild this summer.

The male snowy owl was transferred to another zoo and has already produced chicks with his new mate.

## **III. Marketing Report – Robert Kemnitz**

The zoo has hired Bandy Carroll Hellige as the new advertising agency of record. They will present an advertising plan for 2024 in October.

Boo at the Zoo tickets go on sale September 5. Boo at the Zoo runs September 30 – October 29.

Doe Anderson's WKU student run agency will work on the marketing for next year's Wild Lights.

Trunkline will hit mailboxes in September.

**IV. Friends of The Zoo – Chad Dobbins**

Brew at the Zoo will take place August 26, 2023. Brew at the Zoo with Wine and Food too tickets are \$125. There will be a silent disco, oversized yard games, catered food, and VIP tastings from 5pm – 9pm.

**V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:41pm.