

Audubon Commission Minutes

February 8, 2023

Audubon Zoo Presidents' Room

Attending: Kelly Duncan, Ashley Francis, Field Ogden, Sally Shushan, Lex Kelso, Bruce Hoefler, Leila Eames, Xavier Angel, Joe Connelly, Frances Fayard, Jermaine Smith, Minh Thanh Nguyen, Emily Vuxton, Peter Wenstrup, Victor Jones

Excused: Danny Conwill, Dolfinette Martin, Catherine Morrell, Storey Charbonnet, Gayle Benson, Coleman Ridley, Aaron Miller

President Kelly Duncan called the meeting order at 4:00 pm. The minutes of the November meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed (Smith/Angel). There were no members of the public present for comment.

Mr. Duncan introduced Ms. Frances Fayard, Nominating Committee Chair, to give her report. She asked for a motion for elect the following recommended slate of officers for 2023 for a term of one year: Kelly Duncan – President, Dr. Field Ogden – 1st Vice President, Gayle Benson – 2nd Vice President, Ashley Francis – Secretary, Xavier Angel – Treasurer. The motion passed unanimously (Nominating Committee/Kelso).

Mr. Duncan then asked for Ms. Laurie Conkerton, EVP and CAO, to present the following motions. All were unanimously approved.

- 1. The Audubon Commission authorizes the Commission President to designate signature authority for documents related to capital projects with a total construction cost of up to \$249,999.99 to the President and Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Operating Officer of Audubon Nature Institute through December 31, 2023 (Shushan/Eames).*
- 2. The Audubon Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission to sign an audit engagement letter with LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors to complete the yearly external audit. They further authorize the President to sign the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures (SAUPs) letter (Vuxton/Kelso).*
- 3. The Audubon Commission attests that the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements Government Agencies was presented to and adopted by the governing body, by request of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Michael J. Waguespack, CPA. The President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Audubon Commission are hereby authorized to execute the questionnaire (Eames/Angel).*

Next, Dr. Kyle Burks, EVP and COO, presented the following motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

- 4. The Audubon Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of the Audubon Nature Institute to enter into a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) contract with the firm chosen by the RFQ selection committee, as determined consistent with Louisiana Public Bid Law, for the "Audubon Facility Renovations and Improvements: Audubon Zoo" project. Funding is State capital outlay (Vuxton/Angel).*

Mr. Duncan, with the assistance of Dr. Burks and Ms. Conkerton, then presented the following Executive Committee Resolutions for ratification. The minutes of the January 6th Executive Committee meeting were shared with the group beforehand for review. All resolutions were unanimously ratified by the Commission.

- 1. The Audubon Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to enter into a Cooperative Endeavour Agreement with the City of New Orleans and RTA related to improvements to the Canal Street Ferry Terminal site, adding planters and landscaping to the existing project. The Executive Committee further authorizes the Commission's legal counsel and the President of the Commission to approve final language. Following construction, Audubon Nature Institute would then be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the improvements included in this scope. Funding for this agreement will come from private funds, and the total design and construction budget is addressed in the original CEA with RTA (Shushan/Francis).*
- 2. The Audubon Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to approve final language and execute a Change Order with Broadmoor to make improvements to the exterior landscaping, walkways, lighting and artwork between the new entrance to the downtown facility and the Bienville floodwall gate. The work will include new pathways, addition of planters and landscaping, relocating the Kohlmeyer statue collection, and improved lighting in the area. The value of the Change Order is \$1,534,988.00. Funding for this change order will come from bond fund (Kelso/Shushan).*
- 3. The Audubon Commission approves the transfer to Audubon Nature Institute of funds collected from the following millages in excess of the amount approved by the Board and Commission in the 2022 Facilities Operating Budget.*

\$33,047.89 in funds from Aquarium Tax Fund 3.8 mill

\$62,529.85 in funds from the APC Limited Tax Fund

The transfer will total \$95,577.74 (Shushan/Smith).

Mr. Ron Forman, President and CEO, was introduced to give a quick update on downtown development and Aquarium renovations. The Aquarium project is still targeted to reopen in June. The Governor Nicholls/Esplanade wharves project is starting back up with design. The primary goal is to connect Woldenberg Park to Crescent Park and expand green space and access to the riverfront. Other possible ideas for usage include permanent festival accommodations and open-air markets in the shed locations.

Ms. Toni Mobley, EVP and Chief Service and Inclusion Officer, then gave her report. She began by updating the group on vendor diversity by answering some of the questions Commissioners had at the previous meeting. Then she went on to brief everyone on Audubon's people strategy for 2023. After employee feedback, the focus of developing a strategy became great engagement and retention, transparency into the compensation process, and career path steps. Some of the implementation includes a new training application called Cornerstone, being transparent with pay range for each position, and determining what career paths look like for each employee. Succession planning is another focus of the strategy. Having a deep pool of talent for senior level positions is key. Ms. Mobley stated that she will be sharing some of Audubon's culture code with the group for the next meeting.

Next, Ms. Conkerton updated everyone on the highlights of Audubon’s financials. The November year-to-date 2022 dashboard below was shared with the group. The Finance team is working to close out 2022. Of note, Audubon has not gone into their lines of credit yet, but likely will soon.

NOVEMBER YTD 2022 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD							
<i>(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)</i>							
	YTD ACTUAL 2022	YTD BUDGET 2022	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2021	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL FORECAST 2022	TOTAL BUDGET 2022
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY							
Aquarium	\$3,669	\$2,993	676	\$6,156	(2,487)	2,892	2,215
Zoo & Park	(\$3,257)	(\$2,875)	(382)	(\$647)	(2,610)	(4,030)	(3,648)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	\$0	\$0	0	(\$13)	13	-	-
FMASSC	(\$538)	(\$575)	37	(\$546)	8	(614)	(651)
Louisiana Nature Center	(\$72)	(\$93)	21	(\$43)	(29)	(92)	(112)
NET OPERATING RESULTS	(\$198)	(\$550)	\$352	\$4,907	(\$5,105)	(\$1,844)	(\$2,196)

Excludes capital revenues and expenses.

Dr. Kyle Burks then asked that if anyone wants to come visit the Aquarium to please let him know and he will set up a hard-hat tour.

After some further discussion, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.