



January 31, 2023

A meeting of the Audubon Nature Institute Board was held on Tuesday, January 31 at 8:30 am in the Presidents' Room at Audubon Zoo, Chairman Willard Dumas presiding.

In attendance: Willard Dumas, Leslie Gottsegen, Anne Long, Ludovico Feoli, Wil Jacobs, Chris Bardell, Beau Box, Rick Buchsbaum, Caroline Calhoun, Hunter Cazes, Megan Eustis, Dr. Jim Ewers, Beth Lambert, Peter Moss, Caryn Rodgers-Battiste, Susu Stall, Bernard Van der Linden, Sandy Villere

Excused: Dennis Lauscha, Poco Sloss, Linda Baum, Julie Quinn, Vincent Palumbo, Leah Brown, Edgar Chase, Bart Farris, Angus Cooper, John Davies, Joe Jaeger, John Nickens, John Payne, Tommy Westfeldt

After Dr. Dumas called the meeting to order, the minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed (Ewers/Long).

Ms. Susu Stall, Chair of the Nominating Committee, gave her committee report. The group met on January 20th to discuss 2023 officers. It is the committee's recommendation that the following slate of officers be re-elected to one-year terms:

Chairman	Dr. Willard Dumas
1st Vice Chair	Dennis Lauscha
2nd Vice Chair	Leslie Gottsegen
Recording Secretary	Anne Long
Corresponding Secretary	Vincent Palumbo
Treasurer	Ludovico Feoli
Parliamentarian	Wilmer Jacobs
Past Chair	Poco Sloss

The officers were unanimously elected by the full board (Nominating Committee/Moss).

Dr. Dumas then welcomed Ms. Laurie Conkerton, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, to introduce the following motions. All were unanimously accepted. The full documents for each were shared with the group ahead of the meeting.

1. The Audubon Nature Institute Board authorizes the Chairman of the Audubon Nature Institute Board to sign an audit engagement letter with LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors to complete the yearly external audit. The Board further authorizes the Chairman to sign the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures (SAUPs) letter (Jacobs/Bardell).

2. The Audubon Nature Institute Board attests that the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements of Quasi-Public Agencies was presented to and adopted by the governing body, by request of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Michael J. Waguespack, CPA. Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and Secretary of the Audubon Nature Institute Board are hereby authorized to execute the aforementioned questionnaire (Feoli/Jacobs).
3. The Board authorizes Audubon Nature Institute to create a new bank account related to charitable raffle receipts and expenses as required by recent changes to state law and reflected in written resolution (Bardell/Stall).
4. The Board authorized the withdrawal of the Safe Harbor Plan creation request approved at the November 15, 2022 Audubon Nature Institute Board Meeting as presented in written motion (Long/Moss).
5. The Board authorizes the Chairman of the Audubon Nature Institute Board or President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to transfer funds received (\$122,500) as a bequest from the estate of Flora Maria Labarca to be transferred from Audubon Nature Institute to the Audubon Nature Institute Foundation. These funds will be added to an established endowed fund that supports Audubon Nature Institute. The interest from which will be used as stated in the donor's last will and testament (Jacobs/Eustis).

Dr. Kyle Burks, Executive Vice President and COO, then gave a presentation of the food and beverage, catering, and retail RFP selection committee's recommendation. He reminded everyone that this was brought before the Board at the last meeting. It was decided at that time that the recommendation would come back to the Board for further approval. After much analysis, it is the recommendation of the committee that Audubon enter negotiations with SSA Group for concessions and retail operations, and Crescent City Hospitality Group for catering and Clubhouse Café operations. After discussion, the following motions were unanimously passed by the Board:

1. The Audubon Nature Institute Board accepts the recommendation of the Audubon Concessions, Catering and Retail Services RFP Selection Committee that the President & CEO and staff enter into exclusive negotiations with SSA Group to contractually operate all retail and concessions services at all Audubon locations. The basis for the negotiations will be the written proposal submitted by SSA Group that outlines proposed specific financial and operating parameters; however, it is recognized that these parameters may adjust based on negotiations to ensure the best possible outcome for Audubon Nature Institute. The final negotiated terms of the contracts will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Audubon Nature Institute Board for approval (Rodgers-Battiste/Box).
2. The Audubon Nature Institute Board accepts the recommendation of the Audubon Concessions, Catering and Retail Services RFP Selection Committee that the President & CEO and staff enter into exclusive negotiations with Crescent City Hospitality Group to contractually operate the Audubon Golf Clubhouse and provide catering services at all Audubon locations. The basis for the negotiations will be the written proposal submitted by Crescent City Hospitality Group that outlines proposed specific financial and operating parameters; however, it is recognized that these parameters may adjust based on negotiations

to ensure the best possible outcome for Audubon Nature Institute. The final negotiated terms of the contracts will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Audubon Nature Institute Board for approval (Stall/Villere).

Mr. Ron Forman, President and CEO, began his report with some images of the Aquarium construction progress. The project is still on target to open this summer. He then asked Ms. Conkerton to give a brief financial report.

The November 2022 year-to-date dashboard below was shared ahead of the meeting. Ms. Conkerton discussed some of the highlights and mentioned that we are still not into our lines of credit but may have to do that soon. They are still trying to close out and wrap up 2022.

NOVEMBER YTD 2022 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD							
<i>(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)</i>							
	YTD	YTD		YTD		TOTAL	TOTAL
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY	ACTUAL	BUDGET	BUDGET	ACTUAL	PRIOR YEAR	FORECAST	BUDGET
	2022	2022	VARIANCE	2021	VARIANCE	2022	2022
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	(\$338)	(\$375)	37	(\$346)	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.							

Mr. Forman made a couple of points on financials. Audubon does not normally operate at a loss, and the primary reason for the downtown project is to generate more operating revenue. Audubon only gets money for operations through attendance and admissions revenue.

Next, Dr. Burks gave some updates. He asked that if any board members would like to do a hard hat tour to please reach out to him. The Wings of the World exhibit is set to open March 3. He then mentioned some of the programmatic and education partnerships taking place, particularly in New Orleans East and with one of our board members, Dr. James Ewers.

At the conclusion of the President's Report, and there being no further business, Dr. Dumas adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

Anne Long
Recording Secretary