



Audubon Nature Institute
Celebrating the Wonders of Nature

July 20, 2021

A meeting of the Audubon Nature Institute Board was held on Tuesday, July 20, at 12:00 PM by video conference, Chairman Poco Sloss presiding.

In attendance: Poco Sloss, Chris Bardell, Willard Dumas, Leslie Gottsegen, Ludovico Feoli, Bernard Van der Linden, Susu Stall, Anne Long, Peter Moss, Qi Wiggins, Joe Jaeger, Wil Jacobs, Linda Baum, Dennis Lauscha, Leah Brown, Beth Lambert, Henry Coaxum, John Nickens, Angus Cooper, Megan Eustis,

Excused: Julie Quinn, Vincent Palumbo, Beau Box, Caroline Calhoun, Hunter Cazes, Edgar Chase, Bart Farris, Tommy Westfeldt, John Payne, Mark Romig

The minutes of the annual meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed (Dumas/Stall).

Mr. Sloss then introduced and welcomed two new board members, Angus Cooper and Megan Eustis. Mr. Cooper is the CEO of Cooper T. Smith. He lives in Mobile and has three children. He is also a past board member and generous supporter of Audubon. Ms. Eustis is a former Audubon employee who now works as the Community Relations Director for IBERIABANK. She has always been a passionate supporter of Audubon.

Ms. Laurie Conkerton, EVP and CAO, was introduced to give a financial report. Ms. Conkerton shared the May YTD financial dashboard below prior to the meeting. Earned revenue through May was up 46% from budget, at \$13.5M. Operating expenses were roughly \$12.9M. Net from operations was \$572K, which is 112% above budget and 176% above 2019. Gift shop has had a great year so far. Their net was a little over \$1M and 118% over 2019 actual. Overall net was \$7.58M, up 266% from budget and 83% of 2019. Total attendance through June was 439.7K. Attendance is running 35% higher than budget. Admissions revenue total through June for both facilities was \$8,760,793. Budgeted amount for the entire year was \$7.7M. This is largely because we have not been discounting admissions.

Ms. Conkerton went on to give an update on third quarter opportunities. Our Shuttered Venue Operating Grant of \$10M has been received. Other opportunities include: State Stimulus Fund through LA Tourism Revival Fund, proposed bond sale, replenishing lines of credit, strategically adding positions focusing on guest experience, revenue generation, and reducing staff burn-out, continuing to implement our Living HR salary adjustments, catering and special events for fall 2021/2022, and the return of Cool Zoo, Carousel, Train, and Club House operations.

Mr. Ron Forman, President and CEO, commented on the financial report. Audubon is leading the city in tourism attractions. But we still have a long way to go. Working with New Orleans & Company, Audubon will be a big part of their new state marketing campaign to try to bring tourism back.

Ms. Qi Wiggins then commented that she had a negative Cool Zoo experience. Mr. Daine Appleberry, Sr.

VP of Guest Services then gave an update on Cool Zoo operations and what was being done to improve the guest experience, including additional sand and pricing corrections.

There was then a motion from the board to approve the 2020 audited financial statements. The audited financial statements dated December 31, 2020 and 2019 were reviewed and accepted by the Executive/Finance/Audit committees on June 3, 2021. The committees recommend the full Board approve the statements as presented. They were emailed to all members of the Board prior to the meeting. Motion carried unanimously (Baum/Jacobs).

MAY YTD 2021 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)							
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:							
FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2021	YTD BUDGET 2021	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2020	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL FORECAST 2021	TOTAL BUDGET 2021
Aquarium	\$4,892	\$1,687	3,205	\$2,026	2,866	3,547	342
Zoo & Park	\$2,766	\$456	2,310	(\$4,571)	7,337	(1,233)	(3,543)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	(\$15)	\$0	(15)	(\$289)	274	(15)	-
FMASSC	(\$130)	(\$147)	17	(\$243)	113	(582)	(599)
Louisiana Nature Center	\$67	\$75	(8)	(\$144)	211	(8)	-
NET OPERATING RESULTS	\$7,580	\$2,071	\$5,509	(\$3,221)	\$10,801	\$1,709	(\$3,800)
Excludes capital revenues and expenses.							

Mr. Forman began his report by welcoming Ms. Megan Eustis to the board. He then reminded everyone of the three-year plan: crisis mode for 2020; planning and recovery for 2021; 2022 and beyond bringing Audubon back better than ever. He praised Senator Cassidy for his efforts in getting Zoos and Aquariums included in the Shuttered Venues Operating Grant opportunity. Mr. Forman is hopeful that Audubon will continue to do well operationally for the rest of the year. On the capital projects side, Mr. Forman then presented the conceptual vision of the Riverfront and downtown renovations. Dr. Anne Long asked about the Aquarium closing during renovations. Mr. Forman answered that the team is scheduling the construction to keep the Aquarium open as long as possible. Most construction is happening on the Giant Screen Theater side of the building and should not affect Aquarium operations.

Ms. Rebecca Dietz, EVP of Public Affairs and General Counsel, was introduced to give an update of community affairs and advancement. Audubon is continuing to partner with other park agencies within the city. The Park Partners will have their first public meeting on July 21. As part of the millage agreement, they must host two public meetings each year. The Park Partners will be announcing that they are the recipient of a grant to help fund a parks master plan. Audubon recently partnered hosted a COVID vaccination event during Taylor Audubon day. We have also restarted a partnership with Camp Tiger, which is an LSU affiliated program for children with special needs. Jefferson Parish art day will be hosted in November. And we are continuing our daytime Boo at the Zoo event partnership with Children's Hospital. Community Connect has continued throughout the pandemic, welcoming over 41K guests

through May of this year. Our development team continues to raise money for the recovery fund. The mid-year appeal raised \$17K specifically for Audubon Park. Zoo-to-Do for Kids is September 10, and Hancock Whitney Zoo-to-Do is September 17. Only a few tickets are still available and there is a board member discount. Membership is at 80% of their 2021 goal. There is also now a 50% volunteer membership discount for board members.

Ms. Toni Mobley, EVP and Chief Service and Inclusion Officer, gave a brief update on equity and diversity initiatives within the organization. Audubon has far exceeded its goal for diverse suppliers and contracts for 2021, with 45% of total spending being through veteran, minority, or women owned businesses. Audubon is also working on a plan to increase diversity in all departments, but particularly within management and animal care teams. We are also partnering with local HBCUs to enhance recruiting of diverse talent. After the current data collection phase of these initiatives, we will work on short-term and long-term goals for the organization.

Dr. Kyle Burks, EVP and Chief Operating Officer, was then introduced to give a brief update on Audubon facilities. He began with a tennis update. The team started initial conversations with Tulane and other community partners. We will likely bring a plan back to the board sometime in the fall. He then went on to give a presentation on an Ochsner Stem Pathways partnership and recent animal births. Some of the new animals include night monkeys, the extremely rare blue crowned laughing thrush, whooping cranes, prehensile tailed porcupine, African penguin, orangutan, Baird's tapir, and Mertens' water monitor.

Mr. Forman ended the meeting by reminding everyone of our purpose and mission. He then recognized Ms. Leslie Gottsegen for her leadership as Zoo-to-Do queen and Mr. John Nickens for the great partnership we have with Children's Hospital.

Ms. Qi Wiggins announced she is moving out of state and will be resigning from the board at the end of 2021.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.