



Audubon Nature Institute
Celebrating the Wonders of Nature

November 19, 2015

A meeting of the Audubon Nature Institute was called to order on Thursday, November 19, 2015, at 8:00 a.m. in the Presidents' Room at the Audubon Zoo by Chairman Jaeger.

Attending were Cece Colhoun, Fenn French, Wil Jacobs, Chairman Joe Jaeger, Ted Le Clercq, Ronald Markham, John Payne, Steve Perry, Charles Rice, Mark Romig, Virginia Rowan, Poco Sloss, Kate Werner and Thomas Westfeldt. Excused were Byron Adams, Chris Bardell, Bob Brown, Jenny Charpentier, Henry Coaxum, Stephanie Feoli, Paul Fine, Jeffrey Goldring, Leslie Gottsegen Jennifer Heebe, Andre Hooper, Deirdre Hooper, Steve Kupperman, Nolan Marshall, Julie Quinn, Vincent Palumbo, Michael Smith, and Allison Tiller.

The minutes of the September 30, 2015 meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed.

Community Outreach Report

Ms. Lani McWilliams, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement, gave a presentation on two Audubon programs that reach into our community. First was the Taylor Audubon Awards Program, created in 1996 by the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, which recognizes students for their hard work in the classroom by rewarding them with a certificate of achievement and a complimentary membership to Audubon Nature Institute. She further reported that this year approximately 196,431 Taylor Audubon scholars have been recognized across the state of Louisiana. Next Ms. McWilliams introduced Reverend Kaseem Short, Executive Director of the Gert Town Community Development Center who gave a short talk about his organization's partnership with Audubon. With grants Audubon secured and a match by the Gert Town Community Development center, 15 underserved children were given the opportunity to attend Zoo camp. Reverend Short relayed that it has been a wonderful experience for all involved and had a lasting impact on the children's lives.

Human Resources Report

Ms. Toni Mobley, Sr. VP and Chief Services Officer, gave a report on Human Resources matters and a few key milestones that have been reached. She reported that Audubon was chosen as a finalist for City Business 2015 Best Places to Work,

payroll has been transitioned to a completely paperless system, and after identifying ways to keep star performers turnover rates at all facilities are at an all time low.

Finance Report

Chairman Jaeger asked Ms. Laurie Conkerton, EVP and Chief Administrative Officer, to go over the operating budget for 2016. Ms. Conkerton reported on the proposed 2016 Operating Budget that was presented to the Joint Executive/Finance/Audit committees on November 12, 2015. The overall attendance budget of 2.04 million includes a slight increase in guests which is based on opening of new exhibits. Admission revenue of \$17.1 million is based on the new attendance budget and increased pricing. Admission rates will be raised at the Zoo and Aquarium by \$1.00 per adult and \$1.00 per child. The Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium will increase by \$3.00 per adult, \$3.00 per child and \$1.00 per senior citizen. The Entergy Giant Screen Theater will charge \$11.95 per adult, \$9.95 per child and \$9.95 for seniors. These increases are more comparable to fees at similar facilities and Audubon will continue to offer a wide variety of discounted/free admissions geared towards locals. Cool Zoo and Gator Run will open in the spring and revenue assumes a 20% penetration rate, or 105,000 attendees. The overall budget contains a \$500,000 contingency expense reserve.

In is the unanimous recommendation of the Joint Executive/Finance/Audit Committee that the 2016 Operating Budget be approved as presented. (Westfeldt, Sloss, unanimous)

President's Report

Mr. Forman, President and CEO, reported that at the next Audubon Commission meeting the millage roll back/forward motion would be up for vote. He reported that the Commission would need to vote on rolling back the millage to the adjusted rate and then on whether to roll forward to keep the current rate. He asked board members present for their input. A brief discussion was had with all members recommending that the Audubon Commission should consider rolling forward.

Katherine B. Werner
Recording Secretary