

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2024, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on March 7, 2024. Participating were Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Vice Chair Barbara M. Barrett, and Committee member Franklin Raines.

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Lonnie Bunch; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Acting General Counsel Farleigh Earhart; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester; Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder); Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park; and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

Also in attendance were Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Museums and Culture John Lapiana, Former Counselor to the Chief Justice Jeffrey P. Minear, and Regent Emeritus Roger Sant, who joined for the discussion on crisis response.

CALL TO ORDER

Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. She also welcomed Frank Raines to his first Executive Committee meeting.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of the January 18, 2024, Committee meeting were approved.

CRISIS RESPONSE

Next, the Committee discussed the Board of Regents’ role in the Institution’s crisis response plan. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey invited John Lapiana, Jeff Minear, and Roger Sant to open the discussion and share their experiences given their roles with the Board of Regents in 2007 when the Regents initiated comprehensive governance reforms at the Smithsonian. The Committee’s discussion focused on key elements of effective crisis response in safeguarding reputation, maintaining operations, preserving stakeholder confidence, and fulfilling the ethical responsibilities of the Board. It was agreed that a statement of guiding principles and values be developed to help the Board anticipate risk and respond to any potential crises.

CROZIER NEWARK, NJ LEASE RENEWAL

The Committee was asked to consider a request for authority to execute a five-year lease for approximately 37,042 square feet of collections storage and support space for continued occupancy by the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (“CHSDM”) at 560 Irvine Turner Boulevard in Newark, NJ. The new lease would consolidate two existing leases and increase collections space by 7,127

square feet, without a proportionate rent increase. The new lease also includes tenant improvements for the existing spaces and completion of identified base building repairs. Because the motion required approval prior to the next scheduled Board meeting, the Executive Committee was asked to approve the lease renewal on behalf of the Board of Regents.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved:

VOTED that the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Board of Regents pursuant to Board Bylaw 3.01, approves the Secretary and Under Secretary’s request for authority to sign the contemplated lease for approximately 37,042 rentable square feet of collections storage and support space at 560 Irvine Turner Blvd, Newark, New Jersey.

OCIO HERNDON “STAY OR GO”

The Committee was then briefed on potential options for the Office of the Chief Information Officer (“OCIO”) Data Center located in Herndon, VA. The Herndon facility houses the data center for the Smithsonian. The Institution has leased this location since October 2005, and the existing lease expires on September 30, 2025. The Facilities Committee met on March 7, 2024, to discuss potential options of staying in the current space or moving to alternative locations. As a member of the Facilities Committee, Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey shared that the Facilities Committee voted to approve the Secretary and Under Secretary’s recommendation regarding the Herndon location, and this decision was endorsed by the Executive Committee.

REGENTS’ PUBLIC FORUM

Next, Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey shared the viewing and engagement metrics from the Regents’ public forum, which was held on January 29, 2024, following the Board meeting. The public forum was streamed live on the Smithsonian website and was the first public forum to be held in-person since 2020. The event provided an opportunity to introduce the new members of the Executive Committee. The public forum also focused on key matters at the Smithsonian, including the new museums, America250 celebration, collections space planning, and artificial intelligence (“AI”).

APRIL BOARD MEETING

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey then led a brief discussion on the upcoming meeting of the Board of Regents to be held on April 8, 2024. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey noted that although topics are being finalized, the April business meeting will be condensed because the Board is traveling with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Advisory Board, SAO scientists, and Smithsonian Journeys to Johnson City, Texas, to coincide with the next total solar eclipse.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary provided an update on the state of the Smithsonian. Secretary Bunch first informed the Committee that he is working with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to negotiate the return of the giant pandas at the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute. The Secretary also noted that on February 22, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance signed a cooperative agreement with the China Wildlife Conservation Association and filed a permit application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in an effort to also return giant pandas to the San Diego Zoo.

Next, the Secretary updated the Committee on fiscal year 2024 Federal budget. The Smithsonian is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution ("CR"). The Senate and House both passed H.R. 7463 - Extension of Continuing Appropriations and Other Matters Act, 2024, which was signed into law by the President on March 1, 2024. The new CR supports the Smithsonian's operations at FY 2023 funding levels through March 22, 2024. Secretary Bunch reminded the Committee that it is anticipated the Smithsonian's Federal budget will be significantly reduced, and leadership is preparing for the impacts of operating with reduced funding levels.

Secretary Bunch also briefed the Committee on the Human Remains Task Force, which was established in early 2023. The Task Force completed its work and submitted their policy recommendations to the Secretary concerning human remains in the custody of Smithsonian units. On February 21, 2024, the Task Force's full report was published, and recommendations were released to the public. Senior leadership is providing guidance on how the Smithsonian will implement a permanent policy and help set the ethical standard for all cultural institutions in the years ahead.

To conclude, the Secretary informed the Committee Myriam Springuel, Director of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Smithsonian Affiliations ("SITES | Affiliations") will retire effective May 31, 2024. The SITES | Affiliations Advisory Board has requested an extension of the current Chair to ensure steady leadership during transition and onboarding of a new Director. The Secretary noted that the term extension would be presented to the Governance and Nominating Committee, and subsequently the Executive Committee for approval.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee moved into an executive session at approximately 12:59 p.m. to discuss confidential personnel and business matters.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to consider, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Chair