

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 26, 2016

PRESENT: Committee members . T. Brahm, M. Byrne, J. Taylor.

ABSENT: J. Craver, T. Jarrett.

ALSO PRESENT: Dan Meates, Interim Zoo Director; Jill Roderick, Education and Conservation Curator; Scott Hesselberg, Maintenance Superintendent; Scarlet Behrens, Guest Services Manager; Dr. Lauren Hughes, Animal Family Veterinary Care; Lynsey Engels; Niabi Zoological Society; Catherine Grace, Schultz & Williams; two members of zoo keeper staff.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Committee to order at 5:01 PM on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Roll was called:

T. Brahm, J. Taylor. [M. Byrne arrived after roll was called]

Total Present 3

Total Absent 0

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order, and asked Ms. Grace for an update on the Executive search.

Ms. Grace stated that the position profile had been completed and the position posted on the AZA's website as well as Schultz & Williams' website. There was also an e-blast sent out through a marketing team to our contacts in the industry. That went out to about 250 - 300 people. We have had some initial conversations with some good candidates. Nine people have already applied. There is the question of whether or not the Oversight Committee feels it would be worthwhile to post the job locally.

Chairman Taylor stated that he felt it couldn't hurt to post locally. If Ms. Grace could send the documents, he would find a way to post the position in the area for free.

Ms. Grace stated that she would send those documents, and briefly explained that the next steps for the search will be reaching out to interested parties and having some preliminary conversations with them. Schultz & Williams will provide updates on the search as it continues.

Mr. Byrne asked if Ms. Grace was happy with the quality of the applicants so far.

Ms. Grace stated that she was. There are several candidates that have the type of experience needed.

Mr. Byrne asked if any of those had experience with AZA accreditation.

Ms. Grace stated that the candidates did have that experience, and one of the candidates even had experience at a facility that had been working toward reaccreditation after losing it.

Chairman Taylor moved on to the subject of the next meeting, scheduled February 9th. Neither he nor Mr. Byrne would be in town for that meeting. Then asked what the Committee's feelings on rescheduling that meeting to the 16th of February would be.

There was a consensus to reschedule the February 9th meeting to February 16th at the regular time of 5:00pm.

Chairman Taylor stated that since there was now a quorum present, that the Committee could move on to the items that required action.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the consent items.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the consent items on the agenda. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the January 12th Oversight Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to approve the January 12th Oversight Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Byrne seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor stated that the MOU is still being reviewed by the Civil Division of the States Attorney's Office. There is also no new information on the Marketing proposals at this time, so we will move on to the Society's report.

Ms. Engels stated that at the last Society meeting they had signed over the gift shop and concession assets. Dates for Pints for Preservation and the Golf Outing were set. For Zoofari the Society would like to hold off on that and set that as a welcome to the new zoo director.

Chairman Taylor asked what the dates for those events were.

Ms. Engels stated that she didn't have that information at the moment.

Ms. Behrens answered that Pints was scheduled for August 20th, but that she hadn't heard anything on the Golf Outing yet.

Ms. Engels stated that she would let the Committee know when the date for the Outing was.

Chairman Taylor asked Mr. Meates if he had anything new to report.

Mr. Meates stated that there was nothing new to report, but that there was some information to present to the Committee for an opportunity for the purchase of new veterinary x-ray equipment that is essential to animal care. Dr. Lauren Hughes, who is the resident veterinary at the zoo can elaborate.

Dr. Hughes introduced herself stating that she had grown up in the area, and had even been a seasonal zoo keeper before going into veterinary school. I am employed at Animal Family Veterinary Care. Here are some examples of the films produced by the current equipment. [Handed out film from current machine used to get x-rays] The consistency of the images leaves much to be desired, and the process takes three to eight minutes to get an image. The technology that's being used is at least two decades old, and not many practices use them anymore. The equipment being used now has been serviced over the years, and it's getting very expensive to maintain and operate. There's no guarantee that the picture you take the first time will be usable, and we often have to take several to get even a passable picture. Currently, staff is not taking as many x-rays as should be taken due to the length of time it takes to produce a usable film. Keeping the animals sedated that long, especially the older animals of which there are several at Niabi, is not a risk that I'm willing to take due to the possibility of an overdose of sedative. This new technology is digital, and only takes eight seconds to process an image. The fact that the technology is digital will also be an asset in consulting and sharing information about the animal's health. Right now the way an image is sent to another facility is to take a picture of it with a cell phone and email the picture of the image. With this new technology the image is already digital and can much more easily be shared. Adjustments to the image can be made as you're taking the image. Having this new equipment on site at the zoo would also eliminate the need to transport animals to another facility for care. There are risks to transporting animals off site, so having the imaging equipment here would also eliminate those risks.

Mr. Brahm asked if the new equipment would be portable.

Dr. Hughes answered that it can be. It just depends on which unit it's decided to purchase. The portable option is definitely the one staff is recommending. Personally, I think it would be a disservice to bring Rhinos into the facility without the capability of a portable x-ray unit given the foot issues that Rhinos have. The reason for the urgency of the purchase is that there is a significant discount that can be gotten in purchasing this through the clinic right now. Normally these units are about \$105,000.00, and right now it can be purchased for \$70,000.00. Animal Family Veterinary Care is purchasing a unit, and if the zoo also purchases a unit for the hospital on grounds then that's where the significantly lower pricing is available.

Mr. Byrne asked if this was same technology as is used on humans.

Dr. Hughes stated that it was the same technology.

Mr. Byrne asked if there was a possibility of getting a used unit from a hospital, which is newer than what is being used at the zoo now, for much less.

Dr. Hughes answered that when hospitals purchase new equipment it is usually because the old equipment is starting to get too expensive to run. Its warranty is up or not transferable, and it's started to need servicing. Those units will not likely be in good condition.

Mr. Brahm asked how important this purchase would be in AZA reaccreditation.

Mr. Meates stated that it's very important for reaccreditation. Not having an x-ray unit on grounds is one of the things that the zoo was marked down for.

Dr. Hughes also stated that this technology would be vital in tracking chronic problems like arthritis.

Mr. Brahm asked if this purchase was going to require that the hospital building being upgraded.

Dr. Hughes stated that the only thing that might want to be checked is the outlets in which the unit will be plugged into.

Chairman Taylor asked if this was a purchase that would be funded by the Society.

Dr. Hughes and Mr. Meates stated that that was the goal.

Chairman Taylor asked if the Society was already aware of this requested purchase.

Ms. Engels stated that this was not the first time they had heard of the possibility of a purchase, but no major discussions have happened regarding the request for funding.

Chairman Taylor asked if staff was looking for permission to move forward and gather information on this purchase.

Dr. Hughes confirmed that it was, and then staff would come to the Committee later to ask for funding.

There was a consensus to move forward with information gathering.

Mr. Byrne asked if there was a plan for the empty exhibits, the elephant and Australian exhibits, for opening day. Visitors don't like to see empty exhibits.

Mr. Meates stated that there would be Lorikeets going back into the Australian Exhibit as in years past. In regards to the other exhibit, as has been explained in the past, it is really only meant for large pachyderms. There is no other animal that could be put in there without very expensive and extensive modifications.

Mr. Byrne asked that the staff give some thought to what could go in that area in the interim between now and when the zoo is able to get Rhinos in that location.

Chairman Taylor stated that since there was no way to get an animal exhibit into that area, something like a Land Rover display could be put there. It doesn't have to be that. Staff will have to think outside the box to come up with something that could fill that area.

Mr. Brahm asked if there was any feedback from the QC Times.

Mr. Meates stated that there had not been any contact from the Times as of yet.

Chairman Taylor stated that he had gotten a call from Rick Palmer at the Adler Theater. Mr. Palmer had a lead on a wild animal show that is making the rounds. It won't happen as soon as he was expecting, but Mr. Palmer did think about having a Niabi Zoo presence in the lobby of the theater would be a good opportunity to do some cross promoting. That is a good opportunity for partnership within the community. Also will be working on setting up a weekly conference call with the Schultz & Williams staff. Those calls won't be long, but it's important to keep communication open and be able to learn from their guidance.

Chairman Taylor asked if the Committee had any other questions or things that they would like to discuss.

The Committee did not.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting adjourned.

Adjourned the meeting at 5:44 PM.

Submitted by:

Cassie Sullivan, Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant