

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Chris Kueng called the Museum Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:02 PM

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by President Kueng

**ROLL CALL**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	President	Chris Kueng
	Board Members:	Rick Caughman
		Shannon Gerstheimer
		Randy del Turco
		Jerry Weems
		Christian Garcia
	Council Liaison	Debra Porada
	Museum Associate Liaison	Leslie Sherwood-James
	Museum, Arts & Culture Director	Marissa Kuchek
	Museum Curator-Exhibitions	Leslie Matamoros
	Senior Administrative Assistant	Nelva Costello
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Executive Director	Helen McAlary
	Administrative Technician	Kari Kessinger

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

April 25, 2023 were approved by a 4-0 vote with a motion from Board Member Randy del Turco and seconded by Board Member Jerry Weems.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON DEBRA PORADA**

Council Liaison Debra Porada spoke about the great deal of building going on in the South of the City as many permits are being pulled for those houses. She also said that all the Council has the CIP Budget book in front of them to prioritize the things that need to get done. She wants a library in the Great Park area and ancillary libraries throughout the City.

Council Liaison Porada also reported that the apartment complex that is being built in downtown near the parking structure is now being financed by a private developer therefore we should start seeing the beginning of the building soon.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2023

**STAFF REPORTS**

Director's Report

Staff Report

Director Kuchek thanked all that attended Culture Fest over the previous weekend and everyone who helped make it a great success, especially those that volunteered at the info booth. The event was a very fun time, and everything went very smoothly.

**Education:**

**Public Programs:** On May 13th, the Museum hosted a California Native Plant Cookie Decorating contest. The workshop filled up, with a capacity of 24 and a long waiting list. We hope to continue to offer enticing workshops for our family audiences.

Next month, we will host two Emerging Artist meetups in collaboration with the Arts Area and Golden Artists Inc. One of these will focus on how to submit online applications because new online application system is now live. Next month we will host Golden Artists Inc.

**Built on Water:** All year, staff have been working on multiple projects for the exhibit and now many of them are nearing completion, including: Community Voices on Water, *Water Keepers*, a curriculum guide and the VR experience. Last month, staff traveled to the studio of artist Luciana Abait to learn more about her work painting and photographing water. After the visit, the Education team invited Luciana to participate in the Community Voices on Water project and interviewed her. You can listen to a portion of this interview in the exhibit now. The team has been working with an audio engineer to interview various members of the community and share their relationship with water. You can listen to 6 of the 12 voices in the exhibit now, the remaining 6 are undergoing edits and will be posted to the Museum's website later this summer.

The team has been working with Ascending Edge Evaluation to evaluate multiple aspects of the exhibit. In 2021, we conducted a focus group that informed the delivery of content and over the last year, we've been working on designing a survey instrument to assess the interactive components (*Water Keepers* and the VR) as well as the overall exhibit experience. Earlier this month the team launched 'Water Keepers app play' where we allow the public to preview the exhibit and test play the game if they complete a short survey. This has been promoted through our newsletter, social media channels and direct email. We incentivized the program by giving a \$10 gift card to the first 20 to participate. The results will inform future design of exhibit interactives. On Saturday over 60 people participated on the longer survey instrument.

**Community Outreach:** Education Staff participated in the annual College, Career, and Leadership Conference hosted by the De Anza Community Teen Center. Staff connected with local teens and families to share the opportunities to get involved and participate at the Museum.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

**Exhibits:**

The *12th Biennial Ontario Open Art Exhibition* is on view from May 18 – July 30. The final artist count is 36, with 60 artworks. The Museum Associates created a new award honoring Steven Thomas. His wife, Donna Chadwick, has agreed to continue to fund the prize during her lifetime. The reception and awards ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, July 22, from 5 PM to 7 PM. For the next Ontario Open, the Museum Associates are committed to promoting the new award for photography/conservation. We expect to receive more entries for photography. Below is the sponsorship breakdown for each prize.

- **First Place**, Paul J. Gomez
- **Second Place**, Ruby Leavitt, Gary & Janet Manildi, and Charles & Connie Uhalley
- **Third Place**, Cherry Dobbs, and Sherry Glab
- **Honorable Mentions**, Museum Associates
- **Steve Thomas Award for Photography/Conservation**, Donna Chadwick
- **City Council Liaison Award**, Mayor Pro tem Debra Porada
- **General Event Sponsorships**, The Arts Area, Donna Chadwick and Ontario Elks Chapter 1419

So far, the Museum Associates collected \$2,300 in prize sponsorship and \$1,535 in entry fees.

**Collections:** Collections staff aided the exhibitions division with the intake of art for the *Ontario Open Art Exhibition* and by creating a daily art-check book for exhibits. This allows the front desk to better monitor the status of the artwork while on display. Collections staff is getting ready to start the inventory and relocation of the archives located in the Curator of Collections office. The organization of the offsite storage is still underway. Collections has purchased various types of storage units to help utilize the space and the team is creating new boxes to house some of the artifacts. The department is at the beginning of transferring to a new Collections Management database. The Catalogit database will be web-base and will allow for public access to the collection.

**Other:**

In the last month, the Museum submitted two grant proposals. The first grant was submitted to the Inland Empire Community Foundation as part of the 2023 Creative Corps Inland SoCal Program. We made a request of \$120,000 for artists to develop new work and creative approaches to community engagement that will further the reach of topics from the new *Built on Water* exhibit. The second grant was submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of their Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants: Capital Projects program. We submitted a request for \$500,000 dollars to fund the design and construction of an elevator to connect the existing three floors of the Ontario Museum of History & Art's historic building. This would improve our historic facility by ensuring access to local history collections for the long-term and improving the overall space usage and code compliance of the facility.

Earlier this month the Museum began work with MIG, a PR firm that will help support the public launch and marketing efforts for *Built on Water*. They have already secured coverage of Culture Fest, which is

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

part of our soft launch of the exhibit. This included a 15-minute interview about the event and the upcoming event on local radio station KFRG.

Director Kuchek shared sad news that Museum Curator, Leslie Matamoros has resigned effective June 16, 2023 and will be greatly missed. A farewell celebration will be set up and Board members will be invited.

Lastly, Director Kuchek informed that at last Council meeting new Commission Board members were announced and although not yet official, it looks like there might be some movement with one of our Board members moving to another Board and with Christian Garcia (who was in the audience) being the new Museum Board member.

Council Liaison Porada spoke about losing Leslie Matamoros as being a huge loss because of her institutional knowledge and all the work she has put into the Museum's success.

Museum Curator Leslie Matamoros commented that she is only a phone call away and she will be cheering everyone on.

President Kueng commented that Leslie will still be close by and will still be a resource and we won't lose her knowledge and expertise.

#### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Exhibitions:** Virtual Reality in *Built-on-Water* exhibit  
Museum Curator, Leslie Matamoros

The Ontario Museum of History & Art is working with NEXT/NOW to develop a virtual reality experience as part of the highly anticipated *Built on Water* exhibit. Virtual Reality (VR) will transport visitors to an immersive learning space that will bring to life the impact that water has on the migration of the Monarch Butterfly in our region. The idea behind the narrative is to connect visitors with familiar visuals and build a relationship with their environment through an animated scenery in which individuals can act and see how water, animals, and plants support the biodiversity and water resources in our landscape. Museum staff will present on the development process and share the current stage of development, including a preview of the environments for acts 1,2 and 3 of the experience.

This is the first time that the Museum has ever worked with VR, which is on the cutting edge of interactive museum technologies. It is a completely different way of engaging our audience. In developing the exhibit, we wanted to keep in mind the different ways that people learn, so we have artifacts with labels and text, a range of hands-on activities, and interactive components geared toward youth. The VR is being developed to capture the attention of our middle and high school audience and will also be fun for adults.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMENTS**

Museum Associate Liaison, Leslie Sherwood-James commented that she was stunned with Leslie Matamoros' resignation. She informed Leslie that she had been an invaluable help to the Museum Associates and that there would always be a place for her on the Museum Board if she chose that one day.

Ms. Sherwood-James also informed the Board that the Museum store is starting to work with artists, right now the store has two of the current artists represented and she is scheduled to talk to other artists soon. The Museum Associates are up and running now and would like to see the 'Thunderbird' image on the bags that were given out on a t-shirt too and really liked the Monarch Butterfly portion within the exhibit.

Council Liaison Porada also spoke about wanting the "Thunderbird" somewhere on the Museum grounds where it's prominent and visible.

Board member Rick Caughman commented that he also supports having the "Thunderbird" somewhere at the Museum.

President Kueng spoke as well on the "Thunderbird" not being stored indoors but outside prominently on the Museum grounds and can become the icon of the Museum and possibly a draw for people to visit the Museum.

Board member del Turco thanked Museum Curator Matamoros for all her help and support. He is also very excited about the *Built-on Water* exhibition getting ready to open and feels that the Museum getting its accreditation will also move the Museum up in ranks. He also thanked everyone helping to move the Museum and felt it was moving in the right direction.

Board member Gerstheimer commented on Museum Curator Matamoros' humble response to the comments when announcement was made on her resignation and her obvious dedication to her job and is eager to be a part of honoring her at her going away event. Ms. Gerstheimer enjoyed Culture Fest very much along with her family, especially the exhibition *Built on Water*. In addition, she has gone to the off-site storage and feels it is well organized and well done, everything is wrapped and feels like it's coming together well.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

Board member Jerry Weems was sad to hear Museum Curator Matamoros was leaving and is still stunned. He wanted to thank her for how she welcomed him when he first came to the Board to help co-curate an exhibition. It was a great experience for him and he always looked forward to working with both her and Museum Curator Michelle Sifuentes. He let her know he would miss her.

Board member Rick Caughman commented that he was shocked to hear that Leslie Matamoros had resigned but if she was going to leave it's good to leave when you're winning and right now with the latest exhibition *Built on Water* such a great success, she is definitely winning. He thanked her for all her work and wished her well.

President Kueng commented on how there was so much emotion surrounding Ms. Matamoros' resignation and asked her not to go far as she is loved, and he wanted to still see her around. He wished her the very best and asked her to keep in touch. He also found out that Randy del Turco is leaving Museum Board and going to the Planning Commission and said what a great addition he would be to that board.

He complimented the exhibition *Built on Water* and how glad he is that is now ready to open, he feels it is second to none as it is relevant and historical and feels it will put Ontario on the map.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

None.

**NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday June 27, 2023 at 6:00pm in Historic Council Chambers

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the Board of Trustees Meeting was made by Board Member Caughman with a second by Board Member del Turco with a 5-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM


Submitted:



Nelva Costello

Senior Administrative Assistant

APPROVED:



Chris Kueng  
President