



Fresno's Chaffee Zoo Corporation  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
*Minutes*

Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:30 PM  
Zoom.com Meeting ID 869 1621 9846  
Passcode 173868

**Directors Present**

- Mr. Oliver Baines
- Dr. Ed Gonzalez, Vice Chair
- Mr. Babatunde Ilori
- Mr. Kyle Kirkland, Chair
- Mr. Rion Morgenstern, Treasurer
- Mr. Ross Parnagian
- Ms. Emilia Reyes
- Ms. Julie Vance, Secretary

**Directors Absent**

- Ms. Wilma Tom Hashimoto

**Advisors Present**

- Mr. Jon Forrest Dohlin, CEO
- Mr. Doug Larsen, Fishman, Larsen & Callister
- Ms. Patty McLane, Docent President

**Zoo Staff Present**

- Ms. Nora Crow
- Mr. Steven Gonzales-Warkentin
- Ms. Laura Martina
- Ms. Lyn Myers
- Mr. Vernon Presley
- Ms. Stephanie Regevig
- Mr. Terry Skota
- Ms. Renee Tindall
- Mr. Dean Watanabe

Mr. Kirkland called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

**Item 01: Roll Call**

Mr. Gonzales-Warkentin called the roll and established that a quorum was present. The Board then proceeded with business.



**Item 02: Public Comment**

Mr. Kirkland asked if any members of the public wished to comment. Hearing no comments offered, he proceeded with the balance of the agenda.

**Item 03: Approve June 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Kirkland called the Directors' attention to the draft minutes from June 10, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors and asked if any Director had additions or revisions. With none presented, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted and Mr. Parnagian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 04: Approve July 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Again, Mr. Kirkland asked if any Director had additions or revisions to the minutes from the July 15, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors. With none presented, Dr. Gonzalez made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted and Ms. Reyes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 05: Chair Report**

Mr. Kirkland stated that the Development Committee recently met and received a report from the Zoo's new Chief Development Officer, Terry Skoda. He reminded the Board that Safari Night would take place on Friday, September 17, 2021.

**Item 06: CEO Report**

Mr. Dohlin reported that the Zoo recently met with an outside consultant, FM3, who had been previously approved by the Board to conduct surveys within the community regarding Measure Z. He stated that a full presentation of the results would be given at the next Board meeting.

**Item 07: Approve Nominating Committee's Recommendations for New Board Members**

Dr. Gonzalez stated that the Nominating Committee recently held interviews for two additional Board Members. Ms. Laura Clark and Mr. Ethan Smith were recommended by the Committee. He stated both had strong community connections and would be great additions to start in 2022. Mr. Baines agreed.

After some discussion, Ms. Reyes made a motion to approve both Ms. Clark and Mr. Smith to join the Board of Directors starting in January 2022, and Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 08: Approve Capital Change Orders**

Mr. Dohlin presented the construction contingency logs and requested approval of the contingency items for Kingdoms of Asia totaling \$234,120.00 and the Zooplex Building project totaling \$44,873.93.

Mr. Morgenstern stated that the contingency items were reviewed in the Finance Committee meeting and recommended to the Board for approval and payment. After discussion, Dr. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the contingency items and Mr. Baines seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



**Item 09: Approve Release of Retention for Ambassador Animal Building**

Mr. Dohlin stated that the Zoo was seeking approval to request a payment of \$285,344.57 for the retention due from the completion of the Ambassador Animal Building. He stated the retention would be released when all punch list items have been completed and verified. He stated that this item was previously presented to the Finance Committee and was recommended for approval.

Mr. Parnagian made a motion to request the release of retention from the Zoo Authority when all punch list items have been completed, and Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 10: Approve Year-to-Date Financial Report**

Ms. Crow provided an update on the Zoo's financials through July 2021. She stated self-generated revenue was 32% above budget and total expenses were down by 5%. She indicated that attendance was slowing due to high temperatures Fresno has experienced since June. She indicated that the second round of the Payment Protection Plan covered period ended in August and the Zoo was working on submitting its forgiveness application. She concluded by stating that the zoo was over budget in repairs and maintenance mainly due to repairs needed for the upcoming Association of Zoos and Aquariums accreditation costs including installation of cooling equipment at Sea Lion Cove.

After discussion, including the issue at Sea Lion Cove, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to accept the Year-to-Date Financial Report as presented and Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 11: Approve Zoo to request Measure Z Funds for Design Fees for the Bio Tower and Chiller at Sea Lion Cove**

Mr. Dohlin referenced the conversation had during the previous agenda item regarding Sea Lion Cove. He stated the Zoo is requesting approval to ask the Zoo Authority for funding to add to the cooling of the water tanks in the exhibit. He concluded by stating that at this point, the Zoo is seeking funding for design only.

After further discussion, Dr. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the Zoo to request \$65,500 from Measure Z for design fees for the Bio Tower and Chiller at Sea Lion Cove; Mr. Morgenstern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 12: Approve Year End Thank You / Signing Bonus**

Mr. Dohlin stated that the Zoo has a history of providing a small year-end bonus to employees in years of prosperity. He said the last bonus of this nature given to employees was in 2019 and added that the executive Team would like to distribute bonuses to employees who have remained with the Zoo through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Dohlin referenced the challenge the Zoo is facing with hiring quality staff members. He said the Executive Team would like to provide signing and retention bonuses to aid in recruiting qualified candidates, as well as provide an employee referral bonus. In total, the Zoo was requesting \$205,900 for all bonuses combined.



Mr. Morgenstern reminded the Board that in prior years a year-end bonus has been included in the overall budget but was removed in 2020 and 2021 due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. After discussion, Mr. Baines made a motion to approve the implementation of the bonus program for 2021 at a total cost of \$205,900.00 and Mr. Morgenstern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 13: Receive Wage Evaluation Presentation**

Ms. Martina began by stating that the Zoo's compensation plan is designed to attract, motivate, and retain talented employees who drive the success of the organization. She reported that her research suggests that Zoo staff compensation is currently 15-20% below market based on 2021 wage ranges and that the Zoo seeks to make a living wage the minimum compensation offered.

Mr. Dohlin stated that the zoo industry historically undercompensated staff relative to other industries and suggested that the Zoo take steps to correct this inequity.

Mr. Parnagian voiced his support for providing a living wage but also suggested the Zoo investigate alternative forms of compensation. He also stated that the Zoo should not look to raise ticket prices at this time. Mr. Baines expressed confidence in the Zoo's new Chief Development Office, Mr. Terry Skoda, and his ability to think about ways to supplement funding.

**Item 14: Approve Allocation of Excess Cash Holdings**

Ms. Crow stated that as of August 31, 2021, the Zoo holds approximately \$7,020,000 in cash in non-interest bearing or minimal interest-bearing accounts. Analysis of upcoming and ongoing cash needs suggests the Zoo holds surplus cash of approximately \$3,011,000 including \$937,069 associated with donor restrictions. She concluded by requesting approval to invest \$937,069 into the general investment account and \$2,075,000 into the board designated endowment.

After a discussion, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to approve the investment of excess cash funds of \$937,069 into the general investment account and \$2,075,000 into the Board Designated Endowment account. Ms. Vance seconded the motion which then passed unanimously.

**Item 15: Receive 2021 Annual Fund Report**

Mr. Skoda reviewed the 2021 Annual Fund which captured the funds being raised this year through pledged and received donations. He stated that the goal for this year is to raise \$3.9 million with \$18 million raised by the end of 2023. Mr. Skoda continued by stating that Zoo will start a new patron program in the later part of 2022 and is currently analyzing opportunities for student memberships.

**Item 16: Receive Kingdoms of Asia Endowment Campaign Update**

Next, Mr. Skoda reviewed the Kingdoms of Asia naming opportunities booklet. Mr. Kirkland suggests the Zoo reach out to the Asian community for possible benefactors.

**Item 17: Approve Utilization of Endowment Funds**

Ms. Crow began by stating the Zoo has permanent endowment funds and quasi-endowment funds which are Board designated and that the Zoo's investment policy states the spending policy shall be 5%



of the prior twelve quarters-end average market value. Ms. Crow said that the Board designated fund payout could generate operational support for the Zoo and requested utilization of the Endowment Payout Policy to provide operational support for fiscal years 2022-2024.

After discussion, Ms. Vance made a motion to approve the utilization of the 5% Endowment Payout policy to provide operational support for the Zoo for fiscal years 2022 – 2024 to be withdrawn on a quarterly basis and Mr. Morgenstern seconded. The motion passed without objection.

**Item 18: Approve Funding for 2022 Dinosaur Exhibit**

Mr. Watanabe reviewed the performance of the Zoorassic Park exhibit which has exceeded expectations. He stated that the Zoo would like to repeat Zoorassic Park in 2022 but with a different vendor offering bigger and better animatronics. He added that the new vendor, Dino Don, required payment in three phases, including an upfront rental fee of \$330,000.

At the conclusion of Mr. Watanabe's presentation, Mr. Baines made a motion to approve the rental fee of \$330,000 for the 2022 Dinosaur exhibit, and Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item 19: Old Business**

No old business was presented.

**Item 20: New Business**

Mr. Kirkland stated that the next Board meeting would be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021.

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Kirkland adjourned the meeting at 8:59 PM.