



Fresno's Chaffee Zoo Corporation

**Board of Directors Meeting**

Minutes

Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 5:30 PM

894 W. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728

DIRECTOR	Jan-16	Mar-13	Apr-24	Jun-12	Aug-14	Oct-9	Nov-6
Arelis Garcia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Babatunde Ilori	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Christina Musson-Rendon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Emilia Reyes	A	A	X	X	A	A	X
Ethan Smith	X	A	X	A	A	X	X
Julie Vance	X	A	X	X	X	A	X
Kyle Kirkland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oliver Baines	A	X	A	A	A	X	A
Rion Morgenstern	X	X	A	X	X	X	X
Ross Parnagian	X	A	X	X	A	X	A
Wilma Tom Hashimoto	X	X	A	X	A	X	X

**Advisors Present**

Doug Larsen – Legal Counsel from fishman, Larsen & Callister

Karen Westersund – Docent President

**Zoo Staff Present**

Nora Crow – Chief Financial Officer

Sean den Bok – Chief of Education and Engagement

Jon Forest Dohlin – Chief Executive Officer

Steven Gonzales-Warkentin – Chief of Staff

Lyn Myers – Chief Operations Officer

Nicole Presley – General Curator

Terry Skoda – Chief Advancement Officer

**1. Call Meeting to Order and Roll Call**

Mr. Kirkland called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM. Mr. Gonzales-Warkentin called the roll establishing that a quorum of the Board was present.



## **2. Public Comment**

Mr. Kirkland invited members of the public to comment on items not on the published agenda. No comments were offered by the public.

## **3. Additions to the Agenda**

Mr. Kirkland asked to add an item to the agenda; the approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Storyland/ Playland. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the additional item; Ms. Hashimoto seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **4. Approve Minutes**

Mr. Kirkland requested Board Members share any feedback or revisions to the October 9<sup>th</sup> draft minutes. With none presented, Mr. Ilori made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Mr. Morgenstern seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Chair Report**

Mr. Kirkland stated that the Development Committee would send out the end-of-year appeal letter and asked that the Board Members consider sending it to their contacts.

## **6. Nominating Committee Chair Report**

Mr. Ilori stated that new Board Member, Mendy Laval, was in attendance as a public member. He introduced Ms. Laval and said she would start with the Board in January.

## **7. CEO Report**

Mr. Dohlin updated the Board on the status of the ongoing capital projects including the maintenance warehouse, new entrance, and the proposed California exhibit. He asked the Board to consider adding a December meeting to gain approval on funding requests for the design of the new entrance to the Zoo.

## **8. Approve the Year-to-Date Financial Report**

Mr. Morgenstern stated that the Finance Committee met the previous week and reviewed and recommended the year-to-date financial report to the Board for approval. Mr. Dohlin noted that attendance was poor in both August and September. After discussion, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to approve the year-to-date financial report as presented and Ms. Musson-Rendon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



#### **9. Approve Additional Funds Request for Reclaimed Water Project**

Mr. Dohlin stated that the reclaimed water project ran into obstacles during the project and would require approval for additional funding. Mr. Dohlin then asked for approval of \$21,026.48 from donor designated funds to cover the project overages. After discussion, Ms. Hashimoto made a motion to approve the funds requested; Ms. Garcia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **10. Approve 2026 Budget**

Mr. Dohlin stated that the Zoo's leadership team worked to make reductions to the budget as instructed by the Finance Committee. Mr. Dohlin recapped certain cost reduction efforts including closing the Rainforest Aviary, reducing the summertime marketing budget, and moving the employee health care plan to a captive model. Ms. Crow reviewed the specifics of the proposed 2026 budget including an 11% increase in self-generated revenue and a 5% decrease in personnel costs including significant cuts to the OpEx budget. She went over the Zoo's plan to incorporate peak/ off-peak ticket pricing and bring back the popular dinosaur temporary exhibit. After discussion, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to approve the 2026 budget as presented, and Ms. Musson-Rendon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **11. Approve Request for Withdrawal from General Funds**

Ms. Crow stated that the 2026 budget includes a deficit that would require the Zoo to draw on its reserves to address immediate and long-term cash needs totaling \$3.585 million. She outlined a request which consisted of an immediate withdrawal of \$1.2 million, reclassification of a \$1 million internal loan from March to be applied to the 2025 budgeted cash deficit, authorize \$2.1 million to supplement cash flow, and authorize a withdrawal of funds to pay a legal settlement previously approved by the Board of Directors. After discussion, Mr. Morgenstern made a motion to approve the Zoo's request to withdraw \$3.85 million from the General Fund, and Mr. Ilori seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **12. (added item) Approve Memo of Understanding with Storyland/Playland**

Mr. Dohlin stated that conversations with the Storyland/Playland board regarding the Zoo's possible operation of Playland had evolved to including the operation of Storyland as well. He stated that Mr. Kirkland and Mr. Smith joined him in exploring this opportunity and



he is requesting the Board's approval for the subcommittee to negotiate an assumption the Storyland/Playland operations. After discussion, Ms. Vance made a motion to approve the Memo of Understanding and Mr. Ilori seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**13. Final Comments**

Mr. Kirkland asked if there were any final comments. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 7:37 PM.