

MINUTES OF THE NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST
BOARD MEETING
December 16, 2015

ATTENDEES:

BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Lucy R. Waletzky	Chair, New York State Council of Parks
Andy Beers	Designee for Commissioner Rose Harvey Executive Deputy Commissioner NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Jeff Stefanko	Designee for Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos Assistant Commissioner NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Greg Capobianco	Designee for Secretary Cesar Perales Director of Development NYS Department of State

STAFF

Allen G. Payne	NHT Executive Director
Sarah Purcell	NHT Deputy Director & CFO
Andrea Mangione	NHT Development & Program Assistant

OTHER ATTENDEES

Paul J. Laudato	General Counsel, OPRHP
Jenny O'Neill	NHT Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

Andy Beers called the meeting of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) to order at 2:08 p.m.

Approval of the March 17, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Andy Beers asked for a motion approving the minutes from the March 17, 2015 Board meeting.
- *Moved by Dr. Lucy Waletzky, seconded by Jeff Stefanko and unanimously approved.*

Executive Director's Report

Allen Payne provided a summary of projects and initiatives that he had been working on in the last several months:

Administrative Functions

- The NHT has achieved a savings of approximately 20% in total expenditures due to the staffing and organizational restructuring the NHT implemented approximately one year ago.

Partnerships, Projects and Fundraising

- The Letchworth Nature Center capital campaign celebrated the groundbreaking of the Nature Center on May 14, 2015 and is progressing steadily toward their fundraising goal.
- The Learn to Swim program's 2016 season is expanding to approximately 30 programs.
- F.O.R.C.E.S. (Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship) programs hope to have a replicable prototype after their third year. Niagara, Genesee, Saratoga and Taconic Park Regions have expressed interest in piloting the program.
- The NHT received the proceeds of the John D. Rockefeller Fund, which had previously been managed by the Office of the State Comptroller. These funds (\$3 Million) in addition to David Rockefeller's pledge of \$4 Million will bring the total amount of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Endowment up to \$7 Million by the end of 2016.

Deputy Director & CFO Report

Sarah Purcell then provided a financial updates.

Other Post Employment Benefits

- It has been approximately five years since the Board elected to offer retirement health benefits to NHT employees.
- While actual costs have been low, the actuarial assessments and accounting requirements for recognizing the benefit have a concerning impact on the overall financial position of the NHT.
- Over the next several months the NHT is going to take a closer look at the current retirement health plan offering to see if any modifications are warranted; NHT management will report on this issue to the Board periodically.

Fiscal Updates/Report

- Administrative Budget has two primary sources of income: investment income and the administrative income from certain grants, program and endowments. Most of the administrative income is booked in the 4th quarter, so while administrative income seems low, it is on target.
- Expenditures were just under target for salary and fringe benefit costs, but were over target for contractual expenditures due to the consulting work needed for updates to the accounting system. All other expenditures were within budget range.
- Investment performance through the second quarter was generally in line with the broader financial markets and target benchmarks; NHT experienced small losses in total returns (between -1.5% to -5%).

2016-17 Operating Budget and Multi-Year Financial Plan

- Proposed Budget supports the administrative operations of the NHT and doesn't include revenue or expenses related to Fiduciary Fund programs and projects.
- Proposed Budget remains unchanged from the FY2015-16 Budget of \$610,000.
- Staffing levels and contractual services also remain unchanged.
- Proposed Budget relies on the use of some Reserve funds, however; Projections for the out-years contemplate steady decreases and reduced reliance on Reserve funds until FY 2019-20 when a small budget surplus is anticipated.

Andy Beers asked for a motion to approve Resolution # 2015-8 Preliminary NHT Budget and Financial Plan for Fiscal Year 2016-17:

- *Moved by Jeff Stefanko, seconded by Greg Capobianco and unanimously approved.*

Adjournment

There being no further business, Andy Beers asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting:

- *Moved by Greg Capobianco, seconded by Jeff Stefanko and unanimously approved.*

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Mangione, Development & Program Assistant