

THE COLUMBUS ZOOLOGICAL PARK ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, December 17, 2025

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting, which was held at the Athletic Club of Columbus, was called to order at 4:03 PM.

Attendance was noted as follows:

Bergwall, Tim	P	Lloyd, Katie Wolfe	P
Boynton, Chris	P	Mallory, Lark	P
Brown, Michael	P	McConnell II, John H.	P
Caulin-Glaser, Dr. Teri	E	Moore, Rustin	P
Conley, Craig	P	O’Grady, Pam	P
Davis, Victor, Rev. Dr.	A	Paul, Kenneth	P
Edwards, Dr. Pete	T	Schmid, Tom (ex-officio)	P
Ezzie, Joseph	P	Talarek, Zachary	P
Gusty, Dan	P	Wunsch, E. J.	P
Hastings, Adriana	P		
Jackson, Brent	P		

Zoo staff attending: Senior Vice President of External Affairs, Brian Harman; Senior Vice President of Finance, Angel Mumma; Senior Vice President of Animal Care and Conservation, Dr. Jan Ramer; Senior Vice President of Operations and Sustainability, Jen Ryan; Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Carman Wirtz; Vice President of Legal Affairs, Teresa McIntyre; Vice President of Communications and Marketing, Nicolle Gomez Racey; Board Liaison, Suzy Lucci, and Recording Secretary, Sarah Doepke.

II. **SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Adriana Hastings asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the September 24, 2025 Board of Directors meeting. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Brent Jackson and seconded by Pam O’Grady. The minutes were approved as presented.

III. **MISSION MOMENT**

Dr. Jan Ramer shared a few high impact mission moments from the year:

- Dr. Kathayoon Khalil put together a strategic framework for our conservation work
- Provided funding for Gorilla Doctors to build an office and lab
- Our Asian Elephant CSS held a state meeting with all elephant range countries. We also hired two in-range employees.
- Our baby elephants were a huge mission story
- Successfully hand-raised and then reintroduced a baby bonobo
- Continued our work with the Wider Caribbean Manatee Alliance
- At The Wilds, the North America Center for Bison Conservation is ramping up – next year, we will bring tribal youth to The Wilds to look at how we manage our bison.

IV. **2025 REVIEW OF GOALS**

Tom Schmid provided an update on 2025 goals. We did not make our net income goal at The Wilds and likely will not make our net income goal for the Zoo – we experienced headwinds with weather throughout the year, and it was a challenging year for revenue. Zoombezi Bay did well with their best year since 2019, and for the first time in history we had two elephant calves on the ground at once. This was the result of a thoughtful, strategic plan to strengthen our herd and our commitment to wildlife conservation.

In terms of capital projects, we opened North America Trek, Conservation Tower, and the Hellbender RV campground at The Wilds. This was the most significant investment in our parks over the course of 12 months in our history, and drove a lot of activity. Our events team successfully reimagined some of our fundraising events this year, and our Levy Committee was well-prepared with a good campaign and strategy – our levy passed with 63% of the vote.

V. **FINANCE UPDATE**

Brent Jackson stated that the Finance Committee met several times in the fall to discuss the proposed 2026 budget. There are no new major attractions to act as revenue drivers in the coming year; the budgets reflect a realistic approach for each park. The Finance Committee is supportive of these budgets and recommends approval.

Angel Mumma gave a high-level review of 2025 and an overview of the 2026 budget for the Zoo, reviewing projected attendance, revenue, expenses, and net income. We plan to expand variable pricing to the Zoo. The goal is to create opportunities for guests to visit at times that better fit their budget and schedules. Ms. Mumma reviewed proposed membership pricing for the coming year, including discounts for purchasing online. We are planning for a significant increase in our utility costs driven by increases in electricity. The budget also reflects an increase in the Zoo's support to The Wilds and a contribution to the Columbus Center for Wildlife Conservation (CCWC). 2026 budgeted net income will be short of our self-imposed net income goal of 5%. Finally, Ms. Mumma summarized the capital projects we plan to undertake in the coming year.

Ms. Mumma then detailed the Zoombezi Bay 2026 budget, reviewing projected attendance, revenue, expenses and net income. Zoombezi Bay had a great 2025, with net income exceeding budget. For 2026, we were able to solidify a new contract with our ticket provider with notable savings, and a full year of Conservation Tower will help revenue. On the expense side, we are planning for an increase in utility costs and increased seasonal labor with additional Summer Nights planned. Budgeted net income will be used to pay debt service and fund capital improvements. An overview of planned capital projects was provided to the Board.

Ms. Mumma then gave an overview of the 2026 budget for The Wilds, reviewing projected attendance, revenue, expenses and net income. 2026 will be an important year for The Wilds, bringing with it new opportunities and new leadership. 2025 was challenging; we expected the RV campground to open earlier in the year and for utilization to be higher. For 2026, we are taking a look at all programs and experiences, offering targeted discounts on memberships, and are delaying the opening of the Giraffe Barn. The team at The Wilds did a great job of evaluating their budget and were able to reduce expenses within their control significantly. The Wilds is not budgeted to hit the self-imposed goal of 2.5% net income in 2026.

Ms. Mumma gave an overview of the CCWC budget for 2026. As a reminder, CCWC gets revenue from the conservation fee on admission and memberships, grant funding, donations, and Zoo support.

Following discussion, a motion to approve the 2026 budgets was introduced by Rustin Moore. The motion was seconded by Ken Paul and approved.

Following the budget discussion, Ms. Mumma gave an overview of the Levy Oversight Committee meeting and discussed the resolution for the disbursement of levy funds. A motion to approve the disbursement of \$3,531,377.32 from Franklin County to the Columbus Zoological Park Association for expenses incurred between September 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025 was introduced by Tim Bergwall. The motion was seconded by E.J. Wunsch and approved.

Ms. Mumma reviewed a resolution that would authorize Tom Schmid and Angel Mumma to sign documents at Fifth Third Bank; a motion to approve this resolution was introduced by Rustin Moore. The motion was seconded by E.J. Wunsch and approved.

VI. NOMINATING AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

John H. McConnell II stated that we have two proposed new members for the Board of Directors: Stacey Burbure from AEP and Jessica Mayer from Cardinal Health. Following discussion, a motion to approve Stacey Burbure as a new member of the Zoo Board of Directors was introduced by Rustin Moore. The motion was seconded by Katie Wolfe Lloyd and approved. A motion to approve Jessica Mayer as a new member of the Zoo Board of Directors was introduced by Michael Brown. The motion was seconded by E.J. Wunsch and approved.

Mr. McConnell then informed the Board that the following members are recommended for term renewals: Dan Gusty, Katie Wolfe Lloyd, and John H. McConnell II. A motion to approve the term renewal of Dan Gusty was introduced by Craig Conley. The motion was seconded by Michael Brown and approved. A motion to approve the term renewal of Katie Wolfe Lloyd was introduced by Rustin Moore. The motion was seconded by E.J. Wunsch and approved. A motion to approve the term renewal of John H. McConnell II was introduced by Rustin Moore. The motion was seconded by Brent Jackson and approved. Board members who were up for term renewals abstained from voting on their renewal.

Mr. Schmid recognized departing Board members Rustin Moore and E.J. Wunsch. Mr. Schmid also recognized Carman Wirtz, who will be retiring in early 2026. Ms. Wirtz has led the HR team for 13 years and has done a remarkable job shepherding the team through challenging times.

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DISCLOSURE FORM

Teresa McIntyre reminded Board members to fill out and return the conflict of interest acknowledgement form. Once we receive all forms, we will conduct an internal review and provide recommendations to the Board Nominating and Governance Committee. We will inform Board members of their recommendations.

VIII. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Brian Harman gave an update on campaign progress in 2025, funds raised to date, and the campaign phase timeline. We will have a major campaign push in the next six months, and we would like to grow the participation of the Board of Directors; our goal is to have 100% Board participation in the campaign.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion introduced by Rustin Moore and seconded by E.J. Wunsch, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.



Dan Gusty, Chairperson



Sarah Doepke, Recording Secretary