

VALDEZ MUSEUM & HISTORICAL ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Valdez City Council Chambers– 212 Chenega Ave. & Zoom

Work Session – Strategic Planning

May 19, 2023- Meeting Time 2:00 pm

Mission Statement

The Valdez Museum preserves, presents, and interprets the heritage and culture of Valdez, the Copper River Basin, and Prince William Sound, Alaska.

1. Strategic Planning Discussion
 - A. [Recap of April 20, 2023, Session](#)
 - B. [Finalize Values Discussion](#)
 - C. [Goals Discussion Continued](#)

VALDEZ MUSEUM & HISTORICAL ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Item 1 CA– Work Session- Strategic Planning Recap

Work Session – Strategic Planning April 20, 2023 – Meeting Time 11:00 am

Attendance: Felecia Wolfenden, Karen Allred, Jim Shirrell, Gary Minish, Richard Dunkin, Michelle Cullen

Staff Present: Patty Relay, Caren Oberg, Faith Revell, Danny Tapp

Time started: 11:09

1. Strategic Planning Discussion

a. Recap of Retreat on March 31, and April 1, 2023

Patricia Relay began the meeting by recapping the two-day strategic planning retreat. She shares that it was a good opportunity to bring board and staff together. The existing plan was good and simply needs to be reviewed and updated to current standards. The retreat was used to develop a deeper understanding and reform the VMHA goals and milestones. She states this is just the beginning and that there will be continued work sessions, most likely before the monthly BOD meetings. Board Members share their thoughts on the retreat.

- Felicia Wolfenden enjoyed the meeting.
- Richard Dunkin reported that he did not want to attend but still felt that the meeting was essential to developing the plan further.
- Karen Allred thought it was a good opportunity to learn about the BOD for an initiation as she is returning to the board of directors.
- Michelle Cullen appreciated that meeting in person. She, however, felt dissatisfied with the fact that nothing was written in stone by the end of the process of the retreat.

b. Values Discussion Continued

Patricia Relay begins the Values discussion by introducing the question 1 values discussion. **“How do VMHA’s existing values show up in the organization and community we serve?”**

- Caren Oberg stated she would like to hear more thoughts about how collections show up in supporting the VMHA organization. “Welcoming Stewardship” is a relationship building term that is on any level like collections, relations, and outreach, to Patty Relay.
- Gary Minish believes that maintaining stewardship is an important value.
- Faith Revell shares the definition of stewardship for others to reflect on.

“What are additional aspirational values we’d like to explore adding and why?”

- Karen Allred shares that she feels careful and responsible management in addition to other values are important.
- Richard Dunkin feels as if this is an existing value in the first place.
- Patricia Relay reports that stewardship does not currently exist in the values of the VMHA.
- Jim Shirrell wants the definition of stewardship to be written down somewhere.
- Faith Revell shared the definitions of stewardship and that there are multiple kinds of stewardship. There is “Collections stewardship”, “Ethical stewardship”, etc.

- Patricia Relay interjects that these are a list of values for the organization. These are 40,000-foot values and terminology will be integrated in benchmarks and actionable items.
- Michelle Cullen shared some ideas that she came up with. Some of the themes included Community (being committed to fostering a strong community), education (creating experiences encouraging people to learn), integrity (we facilitate public examination of the past, awareness of common ground of future), and stewardship.
- Richard Dunkin feels that all the values fall under the category of stewardship.
- Michelle Cullen believes that **stewardship is a core value.**

Digging deeper into the discussion of integrity,

- Gary believes **integrity** fits under honoring the past. To him integrity means being truthful.
- Michelle says it is up for wordsmithing.
- Faith Revell shares that integrity means the truth, clear and accurate understanding of history.
- Gary Minish stated that having true integrity would help **build public trust.**
- Jim Shirrell believes that “today's culture is stuck on today and what was wrong in the past”
- Richard Dunkin states that is where accountability comes into play and reports the past.

Moving on from integrity, Patricia Relay introduces diversity as an important value.

Comments about honoring the past were introduced:

- Jim Shirrell asks if we are honoring or telling the past, he said he does not like the word honoring.
- Gary Minish agrees that he does not like the words “Honoring the past” “sometimes you simply report the past.” He likes **authenticity** more.
- Jim Shirrell Agrees with Gary Minish.
- Felicia Wolfenden shares that it is important to represent accountability.
- Michelle Cullen shares that regional value is not needed and she likes the word diversity.

In closing:

Patty Relay reviews the values that are important. Based on the conversation today, we value **integrity, authenticity, stewardship, education, and community.** She notes that contemporary museums need to value **diversity.** Consensus agrees that it could be a core value.

Our core purpose should be revised from “honoring the past ” to **“share the past with integrity and honesty.”**

Entertainment and heritage could be actionable words. Michelle Cullen shared a mission statement she came up with. Patty Relay said it needs to be a different discussion and this aligns more with a goals discussion.

Gary Minish reports that these agenda items should be discussed before each meeting. Patricia Relay states that **stewardship** is important to the VMHA and should maybe be integrated into a goal. Jim Shirrell states that it **should be a core purpose.**

The meeting will continue May 18th, 2023, at 11:00 am.

Item 1 B– Work Session- Strategic Planning Confirm Values Goals Discussion

VALDEZ MUSEUM & HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2027

The Valdez Museum preserves, presents, and interprets the heritage and culture of Valdez, the Copper River Basin, and Prince William Sound, Alaska.

VALUES

Authenticity, Community, Diversity, Education, Integrity, Stewardship

Core Purpose: "Share the past with integrity and honesty."

| Mission Clarity | Sustainability | Community Engagement | Marketing & PR | Infrastructure |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Goal: | Goal: | Goal: | Goal: | Goal: |
| Objectives: | Objectives: | Objectives: | Objectives: | Objectives: |
| Action Steps: | Action Steps: | Action Steps: | Action Steps: | Action Steps: |

VALDEZ MUSEUM & HISTORICAL ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Item 1 C – Work Session- Strategic Planning Goals Discussion

Goal 1: *VMHA is a sustainable organization.*

- **What resonates?**
 - Connection to infrastructure
 - Financial resources and people
 - Work force development and training
 - Not burning through money
- **What is missing?**
 - Community Support
 - Engagement
 - Local sustainability
 - Memberships
 - Physical space
- **Suggestions?**
 - Enhance Volunteer program.
 - Offer more free things! Programs etc.
 - Free admission for community members
 - New funders
 - New revenue streams
 - Flexible hours
 - One night per week open in evenings
 - Museum (party night)
 - Encourage memberships.

Goal 2: *VMHA has a diverse program of work.*

- **What resonates?**
 - Program of work
 - This goal articulates how we serve our community.
 - The word Diverse is positive and inclusive, broad enough to not be too specific.
- **What is missing?**
 - Representing all voices
 - Need room.
 - The word program is not very well connected to collections.
- **Suggestions?**
 - More budget for programming
 - More space
 - More inclusion of indigenous voices
 - Greater diversity in changing exhibits
 - Celebrate what is in archives.
 - New acquisitions rotating exhibit.
 - Kids collections

- Gallery case monthly
- More diverse staff
- “Integrated diverse program.”

Goal 3: VMHA has a *dynamic integrated communication program* strategy.

- **What resonates?**
 - Public Awareness of museum
 - Outreach
 - Social Media brochures
 - Bean survey lets visitors communicate with the VMHA.
 - Mailchimp
 - Website
 - Roadhouse
 - Annual appeal
 - Events
 - In person
 - Vaps(?) mail
 - Impactful communication itself is a goal.
 - Dynamic is a positive word.
- **What is missing?**
 - Multi-dimensional strategic planning
 - Younger audience
 - Community members visit regularly.
 - Tone/means to engage.
 - Not reflecting out inter communication which is good.
 - Breaking boundaries
- **Suggestions?**
 - Commit to an integrated communication strategy.
 - Network is a great word.
 - Better communication about the value of the museum
 - Improved target demographics
 - Target age workshops
 - Improve communication of current events
 - Communication in house

Goal 4: VMHA has a *Consolidated infrastructure*.

- **What resonates?**
 - Lack of room to continue collection/preservation.
 - Mission
 - Accessible
 - Environmentally sound
 - Money Saving
 - Consolidated story telling
 - Single, vibrant space for everything
 - Human, financially, environmentally efficiency

- **What are the most Urgent Needs for VMHA addressed through goal 4?**
 - Heat / HVAC
 - Community Support
 - Champions
 - Repair or replace aging infrastructure.
 - No space
 - Exhibits need a facelift.
 - Future oriented
 - Advocacy
 - Health and safety of communities and employees
- **Suggestions?**
 - The goal itself needs to be rewritten, talking about a physical space. Build it and they will come.
 - Future and sustainable oriented infrastructure
 - More clearly market the benefits of a consolidated infrastructure to a more large audience
 - Strategy needed to develop champion in key position that can more project tour and get it done.
 - City council
 - Tourism people

Benchmarks

- **Financially sustainable**
 - Revenue
 - Membership/admissions
 - Signage, script, marketing
 - “NARM” up sale
 - Campaign – education
 - Up the Rates
 - Upsell opportunities/ lower the rates/eliminate rate admission on occasion.
 - Store
 - Continue to attract Alaska artists/vendors.
 - Signage / advertising to residents
 - Establish Volunteer program w/ coordinator, outreach robust option, IDs for volunteers.
 - Education assistant hire
 - Upgrade security camera
 - Staff support – furniture, tools tech etc.
 - Building / energy improve efficiency of existing infrastructures.
 - Plan to: Environmental Management cut costs w/ efficiencies. Recycle pay backs.
 - Strengthen human capacity.
 - Grow and sustain sources of revenue.
- **Increase community engagement for maximum mission impact.**
- **Maximize accessibility and inclusivity for strengthening community involvement.**
 - Land acknowledgements engage indigenous advisors/ stewards.
 - Expanding outreach.
 - Larger region served Tatitlek, Chenega, Copper River Basin

- Outreach program to take archive feature to long term care (senior center)
- Access to online educational resources
 - Collections
 - Online museum resource benefit
 - Explore hybrid events and education.
- Change out/ update permanent exhibits.
- Temporary changes (new acquisition case that rotates monthly)
- Hire more diverse staff.
- Staff picks the “Showcase case.”
- Natural History exhibit and programs
- Programs out of door – place based.
- **Implement conflict resolution training.**
 - Let new staff and board take the load on speaking up and put to community and others.
 - Weekly updates from each staff member
 - Celebrating staff in e-news + community + collection donors
 - In person communication increase at museum and community
 - Engaging people more intimately
 - Utilize communication that already exists.
 - Strengthen external relationships.
 - Advocacy
 - National State Local
 - Create / update value one sheet.
 - Marketing Plan
 - Board education moment / ongoing training
 - Communication Strat
 - Script for staff and BOD
 - Board advocacy committee chair
 - Both kits to promote at events.
 - BOD volunteer coordinator / museum to the people
 - Validity of history
 - “Why we need museums?”
 - Branding
 - Explore and develop a new brand invite community input membership material.
 - Media – airport video – envisioning future
 - Apply for tech upgrade grant.