



FRESNO'S CHAFFEE ZOO CORPORATION  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
MINUTES

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024 AT 5:30 PM  
894 W. BELMONT AVE, FRESNO, CA 93728 – ZOOPLEX

<b>DIRECTOR</b>	<b>1/18/2024</b>	<b>3/14/2024</b>
Oliver Baines	X	X
Areli Garcia	X	A
Wilma Tom Hashimoto	X	X
Babatunde Ilori	X	X
Kyle Kirkland	X	X
Rion Morgenstern	X	X
Christina Musson-Rendon	X	X
Ross Parnagian	X	X
Emilia Reyes	X	X
Ethan Smith	A	X
Julie Vance	X	X

**Advisors Present**

Mr. Jon Forrest Dohlin – Chief Executive Officer  
Mr. Doug Larsen – Legal Counsel from Fishman, Larsen, Callister

**Guest Speakers Present**

Ms. Amy Avery – Director of Community Partnerships  
Mr. Sean den Bok – Chief of Education and Engagement  
Ms. Nicole Presley – General Curator

**Zoo Staff Present**

Ms. Nora Crow – Chief Financial Officer  
Mr. Steven Gonzales-Warkentin – Chief of Staff  
Mr. Terry Skoda – Chief Advancement Officer



## **1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mr. Kirkland called the meeting to order at 5:43 PM. Mr. Gonzales-Warkentin called the roll and established a quorum was present.

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Kirkland asked if any member of the public wished to comment. Hearing none, he proceeded with the agenda.

## **3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Mr. Kirkland asked if any member of the Board had any business for consideration that came to their attention after the agenda was posted. No items were presented.

## **4. APPROVE MINUTES**

Mr. Kirkland called the Board's attention to the draft minutes for the January 18, 2024 meeting and asked if any member had additions or revisions. With no revisions offered, Mr. Parnagian made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Mr. Ilori seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **5. CHAIR REPORT**

Mr. Kirkland mentioned that during his recent campaign for Congress, he received consistent positive feedback from voters throughout the Central Valley about the Zoo and believes that the Zoo's brand is one of the most trusted in the region. He added that the resolution of the Board to support the recruitment of veterinary resources has been helpful in securing city and county resources to address the area's overpopulation problem.

## **6. CEO REPORT**

Mr. Dohlin updated the Board on the status of the current capital projects which included Kingdoms of Asia – Phase 2, the Conservation Action Center, Tiger Holding and Valley Farm. Mr. Dohlin also referenced a recent meeting with the Office of Grants and Land Services to review the Aquarium concept within the Master Plan and reported that the OGLS believed that the design as proposed was consistent with federal restrictions on Roeding Park use.



*Note: Mr. Kirkland asked that Item 7 be moved to the end of the agenda and that Item 10 be considered ahead of Items 9 and 11. The other members had no objection to the agenda change.*

#### **8. APPROVE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Kirkland stated that the Finance Committee met on March 7<sup>th</sup> and recommended the Year-to-Date Financial Report and the Captive Letter of Credit increase for approval. He stated that the 2024 budget adjustment item will move forward as a discussion item only.

Ms. Crow informed the Board that the Finance Team had discovered an error in projected self-generated revenue for 2024 and asked the Board for thirty days to prepare a budget amendment for review and approval. Mr. Baines asked Ms. Crow to provide examples in her next report to the Board of any cuts made as part of the budget adjustment.

Ms. Crow then discussed the request for an increase in the existing credit line related to the Zoo's participation in a captive program to cover its workers compensation insurance requirements. She stated that additional collateral is required in the upcoming year as the Zoo works toward full collateralization required for participation in the plan. She requested approval to renew the prior year Letter of Credit and increase its value from \$139,658 to \$209,631. After discussion, Mr. Baines made a motion to approve the Finance Report and Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **10. APPROVE AFRICAN RIVER PROJECT PAYMENT NEGOTIATIONS**

Mr. Dohlin reminded the Board that the Zoo spent \$838,000 on the design of an African River exhibit which has since been placed on hold with as the Master Plan prioritizes aging and dated exhibits. Because of this, the Zoo Authority has asked that the Zoo repay the money spent on the design of the exhibit. Mr. Dohlin requested Board approval to negotiate the terms of the repayment with the Zoo Authority. After discussion, Ms. Hashimoto made a motion to approve negotiations; Ms. Vance seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **9. RECEIVE "CAREER PATHWAYS IN ANIMAL CARE" PRESENTATION**

General Curator Nicole Presley gave a presentation on the revised career and professional development opportunities for team members in the animal care department. The revised program includes professional development opportunities for Zoo employees with non-traditional animal care experience and is expected to expand advancement opportunities to a wider group of qualified employees.



## **11. RECEIVE “COEXIST WITH WILDLIFE, CALIFORNIA” PRESENTATION**

Chief of Education and Engagement Sean den Bok and Director of Community Partnerships Amy Avery presented the Coexist with Wildlife California campaign, a statewide zoo initiative to educate the public on ways to co-exist with wildlife and celebrate the California grizzly. Mr. Dohlin noted that the Zoo led the initiative which now includes all the leading zoos throughout California.

## **7. APPROVE COMPENSATION COMMITTEE’S RECOMENDATION FOR CEO BONUS AND COMPENSATION AGREEMENT**

Mr. Kirkland stated that the Compensation Committee recommended paying a 20% bonus to Mr. Dohlin for 2023, effective immediately. He also stated that the Committee proposed that Mr. Dohlin be provided with an employment contract with a salary of \$285,000 effective April 1, a discretionary bonus of 7-15% of his base salary payable after his annual performance review, and participation in a supplemental retirement plan to be established by the Zoo. Mr. Kirkland stated that the Committee believed this contract would retain and incentivize Mr. Dohlin through 2029 and was consistent with standards for Zoos of comparable size, location and scope. After discussion, Mr. Baines made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Compensation Committee and authorize Mr. Kirkland to negotiate the contract with Mr. Dohlin, and Mr. Smith Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **12. FINAL COMMENTS**

Mr. Kirkland asked if there were any final Board comments. Ms. Hashimoto stated that the Audit Committee met recently with the Zoo’s auditors, Price, Page & Co. She stated that the audit would be brought to the Board in June for approval. With no other comments, Mr. Kirkland adjourned the meeting at 7:27 PM.