

HOUSTON BALLET FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
Monday, May 18, 2026

Call to order: The Houston Ballet Annual Meeting of the Members and Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in person on Monday, May 18, 2026, at the Houston Ballet Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance in Houston, Texas. The Annual Meeting of the Members convened at 4:30 pm. Prior to the formal call to order, students from Burbank Elementary performed as part of Houston Ballet's X3 program.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Ms. Leslie Alston, Mr. Nicholas Baran, Mrs. Diane Bazelides, Mrs. Susan Binney, Mrs. Lenni Burke, Ms. Zoe Cadore, Mr. Michael Collins, Mr. James Cowan, Ms. Gay Currie, Ms. Sasha Davis, Mrs. Jo Furr, Ms. Michelle Iversen Jeffery, Mr. James M. Jordan, Mr. Edward Koehler, Mrs. Jennifer Laporte, Mr. James Leader, Ms. Amy LeBlanc, Mrs. Elizabeth Lykum, Chad Libertus, Ms. Judy Liu, Mr. Mark Loveland, Mrs. Kelley S. Lubanko, Mrs. Michelle Maresh, Mr. Daniel M. McClure, Mrs. Sabrina Owsley, Mrs. Amy Pincu, Mrs. Carroll Robertson Ray, Mr. Kent A. Schaffer, Dannika E. Simpson, Mrs. Tricia Singer, Mrs. Leigh M. Smith, Ms. Shawn Stephens, Mrs. Ileana Trevino, Stephanie Tsuru, Ms. Hallie Vanderhider, Amelia X. Zhang Esq.

STAFF PRESENT: Brittany Broussard, Kelli Gilson, Lindsey Hurst, Rachel Koenig, Sonja Kostich, Kristi Roberts, Adama Sall, Jennifer Sommers, Simon Thew, Stanton Welch

GUESTS PRESENT: Mr. Bob Bunch, Mr. Mitchell George, Dr. Michael Heard, Ms. Deborah Keyser, Ms. Claudia Osorio, Ms. Erin Patak, Mr. Kevin Potter, Ms. Sharon Roark, Randi Roberts, Mrs. Christine Sofka, Amanda Swain, Mr. Timothy Wampler

Following the performance and with a quorum present, with Members attending in person or by proxy, Board President Mrs. Tsuru invited Board Chair Mrs. Bradshaw to introduce the new Trustee candidates for the Class 2026-2029. The new Trustee candidates presented included: Mr. Bob Bunch, Mr. Mitchell George, Ms. Deborah Keyser, Mr. John T. McCauley, Ms. Erin Patak and Mr. Kevin Potter, all of which were unanimously approved. With no objections or further business, the meeting of the Members was adjourned.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru called to order the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 4:50 pm. She then invited Mrs. Kristy Bradshaw to present the slate for the 2026-2027 Executive Committee Officers and Members-at-Large, all of which were unanimously approved. Mrs. Bradshaw then thanked outgoing Executive Committee member Mr. Jesse H. Jones II for his service, as well as outgoing Guild representative Ms. Gay Currie for her leadership as the FY26 Guild President and her service on the Executive Committee.

Mrs. Tsuru then called for a motion to approve the February 23, 2026 Full Board Meeting minutes. With a quorum present, the minutes were approved.

Mrs. Tsuru invited the Vice President of Finance, Mrs. Amy Pincu, to present the recommended FY27 budget to the Board of Trustees. With a quorum present, the financial budget for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 was approved.

Mrs. Tsuru thanked Mrs. Pincu. Mrs. Tsuru then invited Guild President, Ms. Gay Currie, up to give the Guild report.

GUILD REPORT

Ms. Currie began her report thanking the Guild members, Houston Ballet leadership and volunteers for their support throughout the year. Ms. Currie provided a brief year-end update on Guild membership, financial performance and member engagement efforts. She noted the Guild's continued support of Houston Ballet through volunteer service, Nutcracker Market activities and additional initiatives throughout the year.

Ms. Currie also highlighted the Guild's support of YAGP and thanked those who participated in the effort. She concluded by inviting everyone to attend the 2026 Houston Ballet Nutcracker Market scheduled for November 11-15, 2026 at NRG Center and noted that Market leadership, special event chairs and honorees for the upcoming year.

Mrs. Tsuru thanked Gay for her report and gave the special events report.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

Mrs. Tsuru congratulated the 2026 Raising the Barre Chairmen Lenni and Bill Burke and Marianne and Joe Geagea, noting that Raising the Barre exceeded its fundraising goal and raised more than \$100,000. She thanked the supporters, participating chefs, and dancers for contributing to a memorable evening.

She then noted upcoming special events for the 2026–2027 season, including the Opening Night Onstage Dinner on September 11, 2026, following the opening performance of Pecos Bill. The event will be chaired by Kris and Richard McGee and will honor Carroll and Hugh Ray in recognition of their more than 40 years of generosity, service, and friendship to Houston Ballet.

Mrs. Tsuru also noted the 2027 Houston Ballet Ball, scheduled for February 20, 2027, at the Wortham Theater Center and chaired by Jordan Seff and Vanessa Ames. She further noted that Nutcracker Market SPRING will return to NRG Center April 16–18, 2027, and that Raising the Barre will take place on April 25, 2027, chaired by Victoria Gutierrez and Nick Pierce at Navy Blue.

She encouraged Trustees to review the opportunities in the upcoming Board packet and contact a member of the Development staff with interest.

Mrs. Tsuru then invited Ms. Sonja Kostich to give the Executive Director's report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Kostich began her report with a financial update, noting that Houston Ballet is nearing the end of FY26 in a strong financial position. As of April 30, earned income and contributed income were each ahead of goal, and expenses were tracking as expected. She reported a positive year-to-date variance to budget and noted that results reflected strong performance across earned and contributed revenue, including ticket sales, Academy, contributions, special events, and Nutcracker Market. She also noted continued growth in the Endowment.

Ms. Kostich then provided an update on the Youth America Grand Prix Finals, noting the significance of Houston Ballet hosting the Finals in Houston for the first time. She reported that the event brought significant international visibility to Houston Ballet and the City of Houston and highlighted the extensive coordination required across Houston Ballet staff, civic partners, hospitality partners, arts organizations, and the Houston Ballet community. She thanked the staff, volunteers, Trustees, Guild, and partners who supported the event and helped welcome dancers, families, artistic leaders, and guests to Houston.

Ms. Kostich then invited Ms. Adama Sall, Chief Marketing Officer, to present an update on Houston Ballet's brand refresh. Ms. Sall shared the work underway to create a more cohesive and consistent brand identity for the organization, including how Houston Ballet presents itself across internal and external communications.

Following Ms. Sall's presentation, Ms. Kostich also announced that David Chambers will join Houston Ballet as Chief Philanthropy Officer in the new fiscal year and noted that he brings deep philanthropic experience and strong ties to Houston.

Ms. Kostich provided several additional updates, including ongoing AGMA negotiations and continued review of potential earned revenue growth opportunities. Ms. Kostich reminded the Board that Houston Ballet is in the final year of its three-year strategic plan and noted the organization's continued focus on building a more sustainable financial future.

Ms. Kostich then acknowledged those Trustees that Houston Ballet has lost over the past year, including Richard Flowers, Anne Graubart, and Nancy Haywood, recognizing their meaningful contributions to Houston Ballet's history and success.

Before closing, Ms. Kostich noted that the organization continues to review internal Company policies and procedures, with implementation expected in the new fiscal year. She also noted that the upcoming summer Board packet will include annual Board materials, updated Board policies, and bylaws.

Ms. Kostich concluded by thanking Mrs. Bradshaw, outgoing Board Chair, and Mrs. Tsuru, outgoing Board President, for their leadership and support, and welcomed Mr. Chad Libertus as incoming President beginning in July. She thanked the Board for its time, efforts, and dedication before passing the meeting to Mr. Welch for the Artistic Directors' Report.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' REPORT

Mr. Welch provided the Artistic Directors' Report, beginning with an update on Houston Ballet's participation in the Youth America Grand Prix Finals. He noted the significance of Houston Ballet hosting the Finals in Houston and highlighted the Company's involvement throughout the event, including master classes taught by Mr. Welch and Mrs. Kent, judging responsibilities, and recruiting opportunities. He also noted the Company's performance of *Clear* and the third movement of *Vi et Animo* in the YAGP Gala.

Mr. Welch then previewed *Where's Alice?*, his upcoming full-length world premiere, and shared an update on the creative development of the production.

He also provided an overview of upcoming repertory, including the mixed repertory program featuring Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering*, Stanton Welch's *Tapestry*, and Alice Topp's *Sisu*. Mr. Welch discussed the upcoming production of *Giselle*, noting that the production will feature five casts and three debuts, reflecting the depth of talent within the Company.

Mr. Welch also noted the planned October tour to Segerstrom Center for the Arts and announced HBII promotions, including Lexi Utz, Nathaniel Geis, and Garrett Yut

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked Ms. Kostich and Mr. Welch for their reports and invited any old or new business. Hearing none, a commemorative video was shown highlighting Mrs. Tsuru's two years as President. Mrs. Tsuru then thanked everyone for attending and invited them to the reception following the meeting. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm.