

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the adjourned regular meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held April 29, 2020 via teleconference at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Brian Conley – Via Teleconference
Bary Freet – Via Teleconference
Jerry Ogburn – Via Teleconference
Jeff Ohlfs – Via Teleconference
Brian Nestande – Via Teleconference
Nancy Stuart – Via Teleconference

Absent:

Sandra Magana-Cuellar

Legal Counsel:

Robert Hargreaves – Via Teleconference

Staff: All Via Teleconference

Nancy Nichols, General Manager
Jim Whitmore, Executive VP
Tara Meinke, VP Finance
Marjorie De La Cruz, VP HR & Risk Mgmt.
Gary Aberg, VP Technology
Greg Purdy, VP Marketing & Public Affairs
Joe Rose, VP Maintenance
Chris Bartsch, VP Tramway Systems
Cara Youngman, Public Relations Manager

Guests: All Via Teleconference

Claire Alex, Townsend Public Affairs
Chad Bird, Geosyntec Consultants
Hamid Amini, Geosyntec Consultants
Xiaofei Cui Geosyntec Consultants
Mike McCulloch, Former Board Member

CALL TO ORDER – NESTANDE

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL – PURDY

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon Motion by Stuart, seconded by Conley and carried, to accept today's agenda. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments submitted to the Authority Clerk by 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NESTANDE

Upon Motion by Stuart, seconded by Ohlfs and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated February 19, 2020 (Regular Meeting), February 19, 2020 (Study Session) and April 6, 2020 (Special Meeting). Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT

Meinke asked if the Authority had received and reviewed the financial reports and narrative for March 2020, and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she reported that attendance was 18,105 less than March 2019, but 14,631 more than March 2019 fiscal year-to-date.

Concessions – In Fritch’s absence, Nichols reported had discussed with John Fritch a reopening plan, likely grab-and-go at the start and Elevated Experiences donated food to FIND food bank.

MARKETING REPORT

Sales & Public Relations - Purdy reported March 2020 fiscal year-to-date attendance was 2% more than budget and 3.8% more than March 2019 fiscal year-to-date. Groups were 22% more than March 2019 fiscal year-to-date, but had 46 March groups cancel out of 58 due to the Covid closure. Sunrise Service was cancelled, as were all tradeshow through the end of the calendar year. Since our closure, we’ve been following a number of the marketing protocols employed by our local CVB and Visit California. As we near reopening, we will begin a more aggressive outreach to the drive market.

Advertising – Stuart reported on the results of this year’s Ad Subcommittee meetings. The advertising budget will remain the same and would continue the Escape Campaign until early 2021, at which time we will begin a transitional campaign to promote the completion of construction. Then, a new campaign will roll-out July of 2021. New promotional and messaging ideas were also discussed.

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Nichols introduced Hamid Amini with Geosyntec Consultants to give a presentation on the Mountain Station wastewater treatment plant. Amini reviewed scope of project and completion schedule. Stuart asked what would happen if the project were not done by December 31 and if the water board might levy fines? Nichols replied that we have already written the water board that the force majeure clause may come into play and we feel confident they would give us an extension. Ohlfs asked about the new structure and if it was designed to withstand winter conditions? Amini replied that it was. Since the project will utilize helicopter transport of materials and construction personnel, Freet asked that the Tram be involved with the supervision of that program. Nichols said that we definitely would, similar to what we do during almost every shutdown. Freet also asked about the maintenance of the system and how often the sludge would be removed? Amini said solids would be removed two times per year. Ohlfs asked how sludge was removed and Nichols replied that it would be transported down in barrels via the tram cars.

Upon motion by Conley, seconded by Ohlfs and carried, Minute Order 2020-8 authorizing the expenditure of not to exceed \$5,000,000 to construct, install, train Tram personnel and write the operations manual for a Sequencing Batch Reactor for the waste water treatment system at the Mountain Station to be paid out of this year's capital project budget. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

Nichols presented next fiscal year's budget inclusive of the agreement with the union, providing for capital projects and the extension of the Jones Agency advertising contract. All departments reduced their budgets to only that which was necessary due to the unknowns. We also reduced projected ridership. Capital projects will only proceed when we have money in the bank.

Upon motion by Stuart, seconded by Conley and carried, Resolution 2020-4 adopting the budget for the 2020/21 fiscal year inclusive of the Agreement with the Union and provides for Capital Projects, and extension of the Jones Agency Advertising Contract. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

Nestande and Conley reviewed the proposals submitted for legislative advocacy services and determined that Townsend Public Affairs would be the best firm to represent the Tramway. Stuart had a question about the form of their monthly report? Claire Alex (with Townsend) responded that they are typically electronic except for two meetings per year directly to the Authority.

Upon motion by Conley, seconded by Stuart and carried, Minute Order 2020-10 approving the acceptance of the proposal of Townsend Public Affairs Inc. for Legislative Advocacy Services; for the period beginning May 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in the amount of \$5,000.00 per month; and authorizing the General Manager to execute an agreement with Townsend Public Affairs, Inc. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

- Nichols asked for a special meeting in May when we should know more from the governor about potential reopening. Also, at this meeting, we would ask board members to prioritize study session items for future staff action. May 20 at 9:30 a.m. was decided.

Project Report – Whitmore reported that, due to the (Covid) shutdown, we have been able to move the kitchen remodel from September to now. The power panels will be transferred over to the new system shortly. Construction is mainly on the restaurant level now. The building settling situation was resolved by both shimmying and leveling compound. Modifications to the Valley Station wastewater plant have been submitted to the City of Palm Springs for permitting. Mountain Station wastewater permits will be submitted to State Park when available. Cable testing was completed and no anomalies were found.

Whitmore asked for approval of Minute Order-2020 and explained the reasons.

Upon motion by Ohlfs, seconded by Conley and carried, Minute Order 2020-9 authorizing the expenditure of \$58,751.00 for technical failure analysis, engineering, design, production of new components and installation of the modification to repair the Tower 1 lay leg anchor bolt. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

Friedman explained that everything was slow and they are uncertain about the reopening date.

AUTHORITY COMMENTS

Nestande asked if we have discussed strategies for sterilizing and getting the right equipment for that? There may be some County monies available for Covid-related costs. Nichols replied that we have already begun ordering foggers, masks, sanitation equipment, etc. We are looking at reduced capacities, special signage, one-time use masks for guests, etc. De La Cruz said that we are also looking to increase the frequency of our janitorial services. We are tracking all expenditures and will be submitting to FEMA for reimbursement. We are discussing PPE protocols and how they should be applied for each department. Nichols added that both permanent and temporary Plexiglas will be installed to protect employees at ticket booth and other locations. Security bag search will be 'no touch'. While we don't know specific requirement for when we do reopen, we are going on the assumption that masks will be required along with social distancing.

Ohlfs asked if we were looking at reduced capacities when we reopen? Nichols replied that we hope for a soft opening with advance timed tickets only to reduce possible crowds. We are thinking of at least a 40-50% reduction. It would be nice to have some revenue even if it isn't covering all of our costs. We think we can get 20 people in a car with four-foot social distancing. Ohlfs suggested we utilize the marquee at the bottom of the hill to communicate these restrictions. Nichols replied that we would in addition to having a security guard stationed at the lower gate where tickets will be checked before they even come up the road.

Freet asked how staff should access County funds? Nestande replied that, if there are some not covered by FEMA, the County could assist.

Stuart asked, if there are fewer people per car, can we extend hours? Nichols replied that we may open at 8:00 a.m. Friday through Monday. Other days, maintenance needs morning access for their required maintenance.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Nestande adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.



(Attest: Secretary)