

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the special meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held May 20, 2020 via teleconference at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Brian Conley – Via Teleconference
Bary Freet – Via Teleconference
Sandra Magana-Cuellar – Via Teleconference
Brian Nestande – Via Teleconference
Jerry Ogburn – Via Teleconference
Jeff Ohlfs – Via Teleconference
Nancy Stuart – 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
Cara Youngman, Public Relations Manager

Absent:

None

Guests: All Via Teleconference

John Fritch, Elevated Experiences
Todd Friedman, MSJSP
Kyle Radke, The Jones Agency

Legal Counsel:

Robert Hargreaves – Via Teleconference

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 Nestande and carried, to accept today's agenda. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-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. to be read into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NESTANDE

Upon Motion by Stuart, seconded by Conley and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated April 29, 2020. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Abstain; Nestande-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT

Meinke referenced the April 2020 financial statements and stated that ridership for April 2020 year-to-date was down, but net income was only down \$700,000 from prior fiscal year.

Concessions – Fritch reported that Elevated Experiences has a comprehensive plan starting with grab-n-go only. When Peaks reopens, tables will initially be spaced 12 feet apart. They are going beyond the California Restaurant Association recommended guidelines. The Health Department has to re-inspect before he is allowed to reopen. Board discussion followed.

MARKETING REPORT

Sales & Public Relations - Purdy reported that, year-to-date, attendance is now 13.1% less than budget and 10.2% less than last year. Groups year-to-date revenue remains 8% ahead of last year. 32 groups were cancelled in April due to the Covid closure. Purdy reviewed re-opening sales plan and protocols.

Advertising – No Report

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Nichols presented Minute Order 2020-11 with the explanation that De La Cruz and Meinke are working on a plan to decrease some of our costs and will present those at the June meeting, if necessary. Meinke reviewed cash and investments as of April 30, 2020. She reviewed anticipated expenses in May 2020 and June 2020 including Mountain Station construction and Valley Station wastewater treatment plant.

Upon motion by Conley, seconded by Freet and carried, Minute Order 2020-11 to approve the extension of Wages and Benefits due to the closure of the Tramway because of the COVID-19 virus through June 2020 or any part thereof that the Tramway remains closed, for an amount not to exceed \$600,000.00. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

Nichols explained that—due to email difficulties—we were unable to send out the revised CEQA Guidelines until Monday and due to the lack of time for board review recommended moving this to the next meeting. The consensus was to move to the June agenda.

Nichols introduced De La Cruz. She explained why an update to the Conflict of Interest Code for the MSJWPA was necessary.

Upon motion by Ohlfs, seconded by Stuart and carried, to approve Resolution 2020-6 amending the Conflict of Interest Code for the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority pursuant to the Political Reform Act of 1974. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Nestande-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Abstain; Stuart-Aye. Resolution approved.

Nichols asked that the Authority prioritize the items from the February Study Session, so that staff knows what to do next, once the current projects are completed. Anything new would likely begin in 2021 unless there was anything considered urgent.

Discussion began with the pedestrian counter at the bottom of Tram Way. Ohlfs stated that perhaps we should not consider any new expenditures until we are back to full operation and the crisis passes. Ogburn concurred.

Nichols stated that the CV Link Community Trail had an estimated engineering study cost of \$49,000, so said we would bring back that in 2021 along with the pedestrian counter proposal.

Ohlfs asked when the tram car replacement was scheduled, which Nichols replied was in ten years. Ohlfs also asked if the Authority could be provided with general cost estimates for Long Valley Management Plan, Valley Station Remodel and the treehouse project. Ohlfs emphasized that these could just be 'ballpark.' Stuart said that she looked at the list as more conceptual and what could provide us the most 'bang for the buck.' Specifically, she felt the Long Valley Management Plan had the most potential for return on investment followed by the Valley Station remodel and the treehouse project. Nestande concurred.

Nichols said that will continue to bring this back to the board along with some cost estimates. Nichols added that Kelly Elliott with State Parks has stated that moving the Adventure Center so that it can become a year-round operation (and a profit center for the Tramway) is a priority for them as well as the construction of new Long Valley restrooms.

Nichols stated that additional future projects are the sister park program and the Tramway foundation, although she has not yet heard back from State Parks about the former. Nichols asked Conley to discuss the foundation proposal.

Conley stated he felt that such an entity could provide for projects the Authority is unable to fund including educational programs, additional support for parks and recreation people, and support for projects like the one at the bottom of Tram Way. It would be funded through a "Friends of the Tramway" model. There would be a separate board and could be a vehicle for obtaining grants. It would require a part-time staff member at the start, but would be self-supporting once established. He realizes the timing now is not good, but something he would like the Authority to consider for the future. Nichols said that we would continue investigating what is required to establish and operate a foundation.

Nichols reviewed board member attendance guidelines and asked that Authority members notify us at least 48 hours in advance of a board meeting if they are unable to attend. Nichols also asked if the Authority would like us to resume the board attendance sheet, as we used in the past. Discussion followed. Authority consensus was to resume attendance records.

Whitmore reviewed projects. Kitchen remodel was moved from Phase 3 to Phase 2. When tram reopens, social distancing will be required, so square footage was measured for all areas and revised capacities calculated. Proposed days and hours of operation were discussed. Safety protocols on tram cars and for both stations were reviewed, along with employee screening and scheduling procedures. Valley Station wastewater system modifications have been submitted to the City of Palm Springs for permitting. Design of Mountain Station wastewater system is now at a 90% completion stage and is being prepared for submission to Regional Water Quality Board and State Parks. Recent cable testing showed no anomalies. Repair bolt for tower 1 has been manufactured and we are now awaiting installation. Authority questions followed.

Ohlfs suggested that, in the online ticketing process, that there be added an acknowledgement of our visitation terms (i.e. facemask, etc.) and that information on the cleaning chemical safety sheets also be added to the training section of our reopening plan. Stuart asked if we are meeting all terms of patron liability for Covid exposure as recommended by our insurance carrier? De La Cruz explained that we are working with PERMA to ensure that we are following their guidelines and all recommended protocols. Hargreaves concurred with comments by De La Cruz.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

Friedman said that there will be signage recommending facemasks when entering Ranger Stations. They are working on a reopening plan, but that will mostly affect the Idyllwild side. The trails have remained open.

AUTHORITY COMMENTS

Stuart commended staff for all the additional work during the Covid situation. Kudos to all, especially in the absence of any historical roadmap. Ohlfs seconded Stuart's comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Nestande adjourned the meeting at 10:41 a.m.



(Attest: Secretary)