

## MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held April 21, 2021 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  
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  
Gary Aberg, VP Technology  
Marjorie De La Cruz, VP HR & Risk Mgmt.  
Greg Purdy, VP Marketing & Public Affairs

### **Absent:**

Brian Nestande

### **Guests: All Via Teleconference**

Kelly Elliott, MSJSP  
Kyle Radke, The Jones Agency

### **Legal Counsel:**

Robert Hargreaves – Via Teleconference

\*Due to video technical issues, Authority Member Magana-Cuellar was unavailable for roll-call, approval of agenda and approval of minutes, but was able to join at approx. 9:42 a.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER – FREET**

Meeting called to order at 9:31 a.m.

### **ROLL CALL – PURDY**

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – FREET**

**Upon Motion by Ogburn, seconded by Ohlfs and carried, to accept today's agenda. Conley-Aye; Freet-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 – FREET**

**Upon Motion by Conley, seconded by Stuart and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated February 17, 2021. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Ogburn-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 February and March 2021 and asked if there were any questions.

*Concessions* – Whitmore reported that Elevated Experiences was now serving light snacks at the Mountain Station. Kitchen would be back online in May and they were looking forward to a seven-day-a-week operation. Freet asked if the pre-packaged food was creating a trash problem in the state park. Elliott had not heard of any litter reports, but she would inquire.

### **MARKETING REPORT**

*Sales & Public Relations* - Purdy reported that attendance was up 4.6% from last March, adding that March 2020 was only a partial month of operations. Ticket demand remains high and should remain so through Spring Break. Purdy reviewed web traffic, along with trends and projections from Visit California's 2021 Outlook Forum, which he attended virtually. Based upon Visit California's prediction that Mexico will be the first international inbound market to recover, discussion ensued about reaching both this market and the domestic Spanish-speaking market.

*Advertising* – Radke reported that only placing contracted media at the moment. Some of previous publications the Tram had advertising in have closed down or are moving to strictly digital. Discussion continued about reaching international visitors, Tram brochure distribution and if additional ad placements are yet needed to fill cars.

### **GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

Nichols reviewed Resolution 2021-1 regarding the fiscal 2021/22 budget. Nichols reported that the budget reflects reduced department expenses, reduced expected ridership and an increased ticket price by two dollars rather than the customary one dollar, which typically occurs every other year. These numbers have all been incorporated into the new budget, which allows us to present a balanced yet reasonable budget under the current circumstances. Nichols stated the budget was inclusive of the union agreement, which expired July 1, 2020 but was extended through December 2021. Nichols deferred to De La Cruz for further explanation.

De La Cruz explained that the union agreement was first extended through the end of 2020. At that time another meeting was held about extending it again and the scheduled 3% increase. She reported the union met with the employees who agreed to forgo the increase and extend the existing contract through the end of 2021. The last quarter of this year, another meeting will be held to discuss a new 5-year contract.

Discussion ensued about pricing, miscellaneous revenue sources, capital budget items, expense timing and computation of net income/loss.

**Upon motion by Stuart, seconded by Conley and carried, Resolution 2021-1 adopting the budget for the 2021/22 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; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.**

Whitmore reviewed Minute Order 2021-3 regarding the need for new control panels for tram cars, which are at end of useful life.

**Upon motion by Ogburn, seconded by Ohlfs and carried, Minute Order 2021-3 authorizing an amount not to exceed \$10,000 and that this be added to this year's capital project budget for purchasing new tram car control systems. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.**

Nichols reported that we are reaching out to third-party processors for our online retail store, just like we did for our online ticketing. We have reviewed several vendors and BB&K was now reviewing the Shopify contract, due to our unique requirements as a public authority. Hargreaves expects to have the contract back from review by the end of the week.

*Projects Report* – Whitmore reported that the Mountain Station remodel project would soon be moving into phase 5, which was the gift shop, photo booth and boarding room. The Valley Station wastewater treatment facility was complete and just awaiting sufficient effluent to bring online, which—based upon current flow rates—should occur in early May. We have begun purchasing equipment for the Mountain Station wastewater treatment facility and the final plans are with the state park and state fire marshal for the permitting requirements. We have implemented a new maintenance tracking software, which allows us to track over 350 monthly preventative maintenance checks to ensure overall safety and efficiency of our maintenance operations. This system will also provide valuable analytical data. We've done many housekeeping projects including repairing signage, installing solar battery chargers on our three busses and repurposed lighting fixtures from the Mountain Station. Microphones for tram cars have been upgraded. We have also done tree trimming and weed pulling. Finally, we are in the process of bringing back laid-off employees and filling positions for staff who have decided not to return.

Nichols reported that new staff recruitment has been challenging for our operations positions due to lack of candidates, but should reopen for our seven-day schedule. She also reported that the water board has issued us our official Valley Station wastewater permit.

#### CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

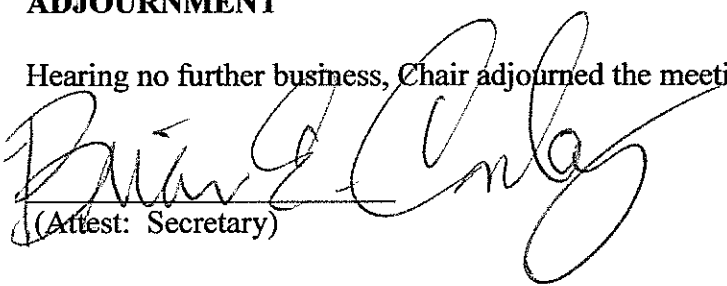
Elliott reported that they are trying to expedite the operating agreement. A new ranger should be assigned from the recently-graduated academy. This person will be training in the beginning of June and should be in place by the end of the summer. Park Superintendent Mark Hudgens has retired and interviews are scheduled for next week for his replacement. Thank you to Nichols for accommodating all of their needs concerning the wastewater project.

## **AUTHORITY MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ohlfs wanted to confirm that the price increase was in the budget and Nichols said that it was. He also extended his thanks to the Tram staff with keeping things going so well throughout the pandemic. Stuart also complimented staff on handling everything that came up during the past year. Stuart also acknowledged the passing of former Authority Chair and Board Member Bette Myers. She was the only woman to serve on the board until Stuart was appointed and was a trailblazer. She was a successful business owner and was able to get things done. She was always very positive and had a wonderful sense of humor. And she remained a strong supporter of the Tram. Freet asked about status of Form 700 from Authority members. De La Cruz said she would be available to assist, if anyone still needed to return them.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no further business, Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

  
(Attest: Secretary)