

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held April 19, 2023 at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Bary Freet
Sandra Magana-Cuellar - Via Teleconference
(joined at 9:35 a.m.)
Jerry Ogburn
Jeff Ohlfs
Nancy Stuart

Staff:

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 Conley
Brian Nestande

Guests:

John Fritch, Elevated Experiences
Frank Jones, The Jones Agency
Martin Foster, The Jones Agency
Maryanne Coury, The Jones Agency
Donnell Norwood, MSJSP

Legal Counsel:

Robert Hargreaves

CALL TO ORDER – OHLFS

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

ROLL CALL – PURDY

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOME OF GUESTS - OHLFS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OHLFS

Upon Motion by Stuart, seconded by Freet and carried, to accept today's agenda was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OHLFS

Upon Motion by Stuart, seconded by Freet and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated February 15, 2023 were unanimously 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 2023, and asked if there were any questions? Hearing none, she reported that the Tram is about 40,000 visitors ahead for the fiscal year.

Concessions – Fritch reported that total Elevated Experiences’ sales in March 2023 was \$813,947.

MARKETING REPORT

Sales & Public Relations – Purdy reported that March attendance was 5.4% more than budget, but 3.2% less than March 2022 due to three closure days (one for weather and two for mechanical). Fiscal YTD, the Tram is 4.8% over budget and 11.2% over last year. Group sales for March were \$163,474, which is 287% more than 2022. Approximately 260 patrons attended Sunrise Service, the first held since 2019. A total of 345 tickets were sold before normal ticket sales began at 7:30 a.m.

Ad Committee – Ohlfs reported on the March 20 meeting of the Ad Committee. The Committee recommends the 12% increase to the advertising budget as proposed by The Jones Agency. New and returning media placements were reviewed. The proposed media plan totals \$650,406 and increases media impressions from 81 million to 103 million.

Advertising – Frank Jones of The Jones Agency reviewed the current Summer Pass campaign, along with upcoming “First Responders Days” and “Military Days” ad placements.

60th Anniversary Committee – Stuart gave an update on the planning for the 60th Anniversary Celebration. She reviewed “Save the Date” mailing; revised seating capacity estimate; premium gift options; and decorator proposal status. The luncheon bid and menu from Elevated Experiences was received and overall luncheon budget discussed. Finally, additional Anniversary promotions and events were reviewed. Committee is asking Authority Members to submit their list of invitees on or before May 1.

Mountain Station Upgrade Committee Report – Freet reported that the staff report for the upgrade project begins in 2013 and closes out in February 2023, and is included in the board packet. In summary, the project is complete; a budget of \$13,342,012.24 was originally approved; and the final cost was \$12,688,435.08 ... \$653,577.16 under budget. Freet commended committee member Ogburn for his insights in ensuring that the contingency fund was appropriately identified, thus securing the financial outcome of the project.

Projects Report – Whitmore reported that, in February, most of the Tram was working in support of holiday crowds or removing snow through March and April. Refinements continue to be made in the operation of the wastewater plants at the Valley and Mountain Stations. Due to the large amount of snow and ice in Long Valley, we’re still waiting to trench the line to restore power to the Adventure Center. The installation of the trail counter at the bottom of Tram Way was completed and results were reported out.

Whitmore requested approval to replace the display screens on the marquee sign at the bottom of Tram Way, as only the west-facing side is currently operational. Whitmore recommended approval of Minute Order 2023-7.

Upon motion by Stuart, seconded by Ogburn and carried, to approve Minute Order 2023-7 authorizing the expenditure of \$55,508.15 for the purchase of a new display screen for the Marquee and \$7,020.00 for the preventative maintenance program to be added to the

Capital Budget for this fiscal year. Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Nichols reviewed Resolution 2023-1 regarding the fiscal 2023/24 budget, stating that the budget was inclusive of the union agreement, capital projects and The Jones Agency contract. There is 1.25% increase in ridership budgeted and, due to increased costs, we will increase the price of Tram fares by \$1.00 and parking by \$3.00. We do have a balanced budget. Freet asked for a subcommittee to be created for the general manager review. Both he and current subcommittee member Stuart thought it was time for new members on that subcommittee, so Ohlfs and Magana-Cuellar volunteered to serve. Ohlfs asked several questions about the capital budget, which were answered by Whitmore.

Upon motion by Ogburn, seconded by Stuart and carried, Resolution 2023-01 adopting the budget for the 2023/24 fiscal year inclusive of the Agreement with the Union, The Jones Agency contract and provides for Capital Projects. Freet-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye. Motion approved.

Nichols reported that both our Palm Springs City Council nominees are up for renewal this September, so is asking for the Authority's consensus on allowing her to correspond with the City asking for Nancy Stuart and Jerry Ogburn to be reappointed. There were no objections.

Nichols asked if the Authority would like to schedule a study session to discuss future project priorities? June 21 was proposed, immediately following the regular Authority meeting. There were no objections, so the study session will be scheduled for that time. Freet asked that the general manager have a project list prepared for discussion.

Nichols reported that, due to shut-down being moved to August to accommodate the Tram's 60th anniversary and the unavailability of the tram car on the currently August Board meeting scheduled date, if members would be in favor of moving the meeting to another date? Stuart suggested it be held September 13, so final details for the 60th Anniversary Luncheon can be reviewed. A revised minute order will be brought to the June meeting for approval.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

Norwood reported on the April 7 reopening of the back country. Greg Martin started as the new Desert District Division Chief on April 1. "Reserve California," the State Parks online camping reservation system, is going online May 1 for MSJSP. Two new park aides are being hired. Kelly Elliott will be conducting her "Thursday-Venture" tour for the entire district at the Tram on the morning of May 11.


AUTHORITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Ohlfs reported that this is National Volunteer Week and he wanted to extend his thanks to all the volunteers in the State Park. Ogburn reported that he and his guests thought Sunrise Service was a very high-class event. It was a packed house, and the pastor and song program were very well done. Freet reported that the Chino Cone Committee participated in a meeting with the Nichols

Foundation Board. They were there to listen and give input. As a result of that meeting, Tram Staff did a review of jurisdictional maps. Ogburn added that the Foundation is the property owner and no promises were made by the committee. Stuart thanked Tara and Nancy for the excellent budget meeting held previously and all the hard work that went into the budget packet by all the departments.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.


(Attest: Secretary)