

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the adjourned meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held October 30, 2024 at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Jeff Ohlfs
Brian Conley – via Teleconference
Bary Freet
Jonathan Hoy
Sandra Magana-Cuellar
Jerry Ogburn – Via Teleconference
Nancy Stuart

Staff:

Nancy Nichols, General Manager
Jim Whitmore, Executive VP
Tara Meinke, VP Finance
Marjorie De La Cruz, VP HR & Risk Mgmt.
Greg Purdy, VP Marketing & Public Affairs
Jamison Moore, IT Manager

Guests:

Maryanne Coury, The Jones Agency
Martin Foster, The Jones Agency
John Fritch, Elevated Experiences
Donnell Norwood, MSJSP
Eric Thronson, Townsend Public Affairs

Legal Counsel:

Craig Hayes

CALL TO ORDER – OHLFS

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL – PURDY

WELCOME OF GUESTS - OHLFS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OHLFS

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Josh Heinz, community engagement manager for Visit Greater Palm Springs, discussed autism training through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OHLFS

Upon Motion by Conley, seconded by Freet and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated August 21, 2024. Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Hoy-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Stuart-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Motion approved.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY REPORT – Eric Thronson -Townsend Public Affairs

Thronson gave a report on bills from the recent California and Federal legislative sessions; reviewed California ballot initiatives and how they may affect the Tram; and discussed possible scenarios, depending upon results of the upcoming election. Thronson also detailed their advocacy priorities for the coming year.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT

Meinke asked if the Authority had received and reviewed the financial reports and narrative for July, August and September 2024, and asked if there were any questions.

Concessions – Fritch reported that total Elevated Experiences' sales for August 2024 and September 2024 were \$752,910. He stated there may be a few menu changes for the winter and Peaks was recently named best American restaurant in Palm Springs by BusinessRate, based on Google reviews.

MARKETING REPORT

Sales & Marketing Report – Purdy reviewed ticket sales for September 2024 compared to September 2023. The Tram was open September 2023 for its 60th anniversary celebration versus closed in September 24 for annual maintenance. Purdy reported on possible reasons for lower year-to-date attendance, recent trade shows and Tram events. He stated ABC's "Live with Kelly and Mark" would film at the Tram in the coming week, the 2024 celebrity tree lighter was announced, as was the new look for the Tram's website. Purdy stated the Tram was prominently featured in the new Visit Greater Palm Springs branding campaign entitled "Escape Your Ordinary."

Advertising – Foster of The Jones Agency showed a photo of the new I-10 billboard and shared ads of the Snow Guessing Contest, Thanksgiving and the holiday events. Foster stated that there were also television and radio ads in both Spanish and English.

Projects Report – Whitmore reviewed Minute Orders 2024-10, 2024-11 and 2024-12 and recommended their approval.

Upon motion by Hoy, seconded by Freet and carried, to approve the following minute orders:

Minute Order 2024-10, approving an amount of \$12,426.44 for the replacement of Cascade Café canopy and the dock screen, and that this expenditure be added to the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Maintenance Budget under Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment.

Minute Order 2024-11, ratifying an expenditure of \$11,727 for the purchase of an air compressor and delivery, and that this expenditure be added to this year's Capital Improvement Budget.

Projects Report – continued

Minute Order 2024-12, approving the purchase of a coin operated telescope not to exceed \$7,000.00 (including shipping, handling and taxes), and that this amount be added to the Operations Budget for this fiscal year under Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment.

Conley-Aye; Freet-Aye; Hoy-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Stuart-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Motion approved.

Whitmore reported that the first week of shutdown was devoted to mandatory training required by State, Federal and Tram policy. In addition, each department conducted its own training, which included security, customer service, de-escalation, crisis management and car operator training. IT Department activity included upgrades to host software, server memory, firewall, back-up storage and the network, and a new phone system was installed. IT also conducted malware training for staff to improve cybersecurity. Tramway Systems slipped and re-socketed track rope 1; changed and re-socketed pendant ropes; and replaced a hydraulic cylinder. They serviced and rebuilt the drive mode gearbox, inspected all sockets, and tested all slack carriers and tower sheaves. The State conducted and completed their annual inspection of the Tramway, and all inspections passed. At the Valley Station, all doors and locks were rekeyed; new air conditioning system was completed; dumb waiter was rehabbed and put back in service; trees were trimmed and decorative landscaping rock was replaced. In addition, the blue tramcar area was remodeled; the museum bench formerly at the Mountain Station was relocated next to it; dry brush near the roads and parking lots were cleared; designated areas of the Valley Station were repainted and all surfaces cleaned. At the Mountain Station, new receivers for incoming water were installed; counter-weight room had new metal flooring installed; restaurant patio was resurfaced, and 350 feet of the concrete walkway was replaced. The window trim on the north end of the Mountain Station was replaced and replacement of the copper caps on the glue lam beams on the exterior of the Mountain Station has begun. Retail conducted inventory under the purview of the new auditors.

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

De La Cruz explained the procedure for Ethics Training as mandated by AB1234, which needs to be completed by December 31, 2024.

Nichols asked the Authority if there were any objections for her sending a letter from the Authority to Supervisor Perez's office recommending Authority Member Freet's reappointment. There were no objections.

Nichols reported that the Long Valley Gateway Project was moving forward and recommended an ad hoc committee be formed. Authority Member Ohlfs was recommended to serve, and Authority Member Magana-Cuellar would serve as the second member.

Nichols stated an ad hoc Advertising Committee needed to be formed. Stuart was recommended to serve. Authority Member Freet would serve as the second member. There were no objections to the committee appointments.

Nichols reported that the next MSJWPA meeting is January 15, 2025.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

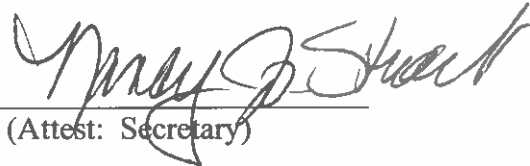
Donnell stated the district director had pre-approved 6-8 items in the Long Valley Gateway Project. Wilderness camping permits would decrease for the winter season; Stone Creek campground would be closing. Skyline Trail has been reassessed by the rangers and would likely reopen in November. Reserve California should go live next month for online camping reservations. The Hidden Lake permit system is still in development. Rangers and park aids completed signage and trail improvements during shutdown, and the ranger station was painted. They are looking forward to taping the "Live with Kelly and Mark" hiking segment on Friday, November 8.

AUTHORITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Ohlfs thanked Magana-Cuellar for chairing the last MSJWPA meeting. Freet commented that the new restaurant decking looked nice. He asked if replacement of the beam end-caps was complete. Whitmore stated the project was in-progress and serves to protect the beams from insect and weather damage. Freet asked about the increase to janitorial costs. Whitmore explained their service has been restored to pre-Covid levels.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Ohlfs adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.


(Attest: Secretary)