

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held April 16, 2025 at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Sandra Magana-Cuellar – via Teleconference
Brian Conley – via Teleconference
Jonathan Hoy
Jerry Ogburn
Jeff Ohlfs
Nancy Stuart
Giovanni Virgen

Staff:

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
Jamison Moore, IT Manager

Legal Counsel:

Craig Hayes

Guests:

Martin Foster, The Jones Agency
John Fritch, Elevated Experiences
Frank Jones, The Jones Agency

CALL TO ORDER – STUART

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

ROLL CALL – PURDY

Conley stated he was appearing remotely under the just cause teleconferencing exception due to a physical issue that will not allow him to participate in person today.

Magana-Cuellar stated she was appearing remotely under the just cause teleconferencing exception due to a childcare issue that will not allow her to participate in person today.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOME OF GUESTS – STUART

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – STUART

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – STUART

Upon Motion by Hoy, seconded by Ohlfs and carried, to approve meeting minutes dated February 19, 2025. Conley-Aye; Hoy-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye; Virgen-Aye. Motion approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT

Meinke asked if the Authority had received and reviewed the financial reports and narrative for January 2025 through March 2025 and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Concessions – Fritch reported that Elevated Experiences had a record month with total food and beverage sales of \$1,114,585.45. They are currently planning Easter and Mother's Day, as well as Restaurant Week May 30-June 8.

MARKETING REPORT

Sales & Public Relations – Purdy reported that the Tram had an excellent March ending 34.3% ahead of budget and 7.4% ahead of last year. Currently, the Tram is 6.3% ahead of year-to-date budget and 4.3% behind year-to-date actual. Groups did about \$18,000 more than the prior March and is ahead about \$25,000 year-to-date. The Spring South Coast Plaza Look Book photographed at the Tram is now online. The Tramway was mentioned on the Hulu series "Mid-Century Modern;" the Tram and Peaks received a rave review by recording star Danny Lux on Apple Maps; the Discover Palm Desert video about the Tram has now received 33,000 views on Facebook; and Visit California has produced several social media videos about or including the Tram. Purdy then discussed headwinds facing the Tram and U.S. tourism in general, as well as how the Tram is prepared to pivot geographic placement of advertising should international inbound or longer-haul domestic tourism contract in the coming months.

Advertising – Jones shared an ad for the upcoming Summer Pass campaign, as well as the Tramway cover of the July Desert Guide issue. Also discussed work currently underway in developing creative concepts for the new campaign.

Ad Committee – Stuart reported that the Ad Committee met on March 7 to review the proposed '25/'26 media plan. The Committee recommends continuing the existing advertising budget as proposed by The Jones Agency. The plan totals \$644,415 and increases media impressions from 127 million in '24/'25 to 130 million in '25/'26. The plan largely mirrors the '24/'25 plan with niche market expansions both geographically and ethnically. Conley reported that he is very impressed with The Jones Agency and supports the renewal of their contract. Stuart concurred, adding that Conley has made a valuable contribution to the Ad Committee.

Projects Report – Whitmore reported on successful scheduled testing of pendant cables that hold the counterweights. Also, fabricated a spin containment system to make cable changes easier; fabricated new jibs to facilitate slack carrier replacements; replaced perimeter lights in theater; performed necessary preventative maintenance on systems and facilities; and periodic snow removal from patios, stairs and trails, when necessary. Mountain Station facilities personnel assisted State Parks in cataloging and cleaning museum displays and, in cooperation with State Parks, hazardous trees were removed along the concrete trail. During a windstorm, power was turned off to the Mountain Station for safety reasons. After the wind event, a survey of the power line was conducted, and it was determined a power pole cross arm had broken causing damage to

the bracing and insulators on that pole. After repairs, power was restored to the Mountain Station. The pedestrian counter showed a 30-day total of 1,823 hikers with a daily average of 59 hikers.

Whitmore reviewed the costs associated with the power pole repair from the wind event, which included use of a helicopter and fuel truck for two days and asked for the approval on Minute Order 2025-03. He also recommended that Minute Order 2025-4 be approved moving a capital project from '25/'26 budget to the current, due to possible price increases and supply chain delays.

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

Minute Order 2025-3, approving \$14,537.00 for the helicopter rental services for the emergency repair of a power line to the Mountain Station and this amount be added to this fiscal year's Maintenance budget.

Minute Order 2025-4, approving \$65,000.00 be added to the Capital Improvement budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25 for the Point of Sales System project and this amount be added to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Capital Improvement budget.

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

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Nichols reviewed Resolution 2025-2 regarding the fiscal 2025/26 budget, stating that the budget was inclusive of the union agreement, capital projects and The Jones Agency contract. There is 1.5% increase in budgeted attendance and, due to increased costs, we will increase the price of Tram fares by \$2.00 with parking remaining the same. We do have a balanced budget..

Upon motion by Ogburn, seconded by Hoy and carried, Resolution 2025-02 adopting the budget for the 2025/26 fiscal year inclusive of the Agreement with the Union, The Jones Agency contract and provides for Capital Projects. Conley-Aye; Hoy-Aye; Magana-Cuellar-Aye; Ogburn-Aye; Ohlfs-Aye; Stuart-Aye; Virgen-Aye. Motion approved.

Ohlfs reported that the Long Valley Gateway Project Committee met with Tram Staff and State Park Superintendent Elliott to discuss the original plan and narrow down priorities. All agreed with the necessary scope of work, so are now awaiting the RFP to be sent and start receiving bids.

Ogburn reported that he and Authority Member Virgen had met with members of the Nichols Family regarding the Chino Cienega Foundation Project. The Nichols Family is waiting to meet with the city manager or a councilmember to assess the City's interest in taking a lead role in this gateway project. Virgen added that a more appealing entrance would be a benefit to the City. Nichols recommended that Virgen be added to the Chino Cienega Foundation Project Committee and received consensus that he be added.

Nichols said that it was time for her review and contract review. She recommended that Authority Members Stuart and Conley serve on an ad hoc review committee and received consensus that they be approved.

Nichols deferred to De La Cruz regarding board member sexual harassment training. De La Cruz reported that Authority Members have been registered for the BBK Learning Hub for this training and had until June 30 to complete the training.

Nichols reported that, with the new budget approved, autism training for management would begin July 1 with hourly staff during the September shutdown period. Nichols explained what all was involved with the certification process and what resources would be available for visitors afterwards.

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 18.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK REPORT

No report.

AUTHORITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Magana-Cuellar thanked Stuart for serving as acting chair in her absence today. Conley commented that California Natural Resources Secretary, Wade Crofoot, is doing speaking engagements throughout California and asked that the Tram, in conjunction with State Parks, consider reaching out to him to do a presentation at the Tram. Townsend Public Affairs may be able to assist.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, chair adjourned the meeting at 10:04 a.m.


(Attest: Secretary)