



Thursday, April 23, 2026

MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:30am by Chair Cinde Cassidy. The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was held as part of the Board Retreat at USC Marine Science Center, Big Fisherman Cove, Isthmus, Catalina Island with in-person attendance. The events of the day were held in joint sessions for both Love Catalina Island and Care For Catalina.

DIRECTORS PRESENT (15)

Cassidy, Alkibay, Fornasiere, Bombard, Allen, Beach, Bergman, Bradley, Flathers, Garcia, Hohenstein, Leyva, Skelton, Upton, Welham

DIRECTORS ABSENT (4)

Maistros, Say, Rusack, Ledebur

STAFF PRESENT (6)

Luttjohann, Miller, Johnson, Hubert, Cook, Hernandez

GUESTS (1)

Chilton

BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

Cassidy gave a thank you to Hubert for organizing this Board Retreat and Meeting at USC Marine Science Center. She introduced guest Jacqueline Chilton saying there will be more coming later in the meeting. Cassidy mentioned that only six evaluations were received after the March Board meeting and made a request for Board members to respond. She is hopeful for at least half of the Board to complete the survey. These are helpful to determine what is working or not working and align the meetings with needs. Cassidy apologized to staff for cutting short a report at a recent meeting. She is concerned that some are not truly present during Board meetings, adding the meetings are only once a month. Cassidy said it is important to be engaged while the meeting is in progress; all participants are needed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The minutes from March 19, 2026 Board meeting and minutes from March 19, 2026 Care for Catalina Board meeting were presented for approval.

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Bergman; passed unanimously

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Policy 2.3.2 Work Plan Development (Governance Committee)—Cassidy explained that now is the time for the Board Chair and Chair Elect to modify the work plan cycle. She asked for suggestions from the Board and stated she and Fornasiere feel no changes are necessary at this time. Hearing no further discussion a motion was requested.

Motion to accept the Work Plan Development as unchanged from the prior year by Bombard, second Skelton; passed unanimously

Policy 2.3.2 Proposed Meeting Schedule—The upcoming schedule, included in the Board Packet, was shown on the screen. A conflict the third Thursday in October moves the Board meeting to October 22. Discussion on the November 19 Board Meeting and Marketing Conference led to a show of hands for those feeling the Marketing Conference should

be mandatory instead of a bonus attendance; a majority raised their hands. The November date could change and Cassidy requested those with conflicts to please email staff explaining the issues to be considered.

Policy 2.9 Board and Officer Nominations & Elections—Cassidy reminded of dedicated seats saying the Catalina Island Company (CICo) wishes to replace Rusack with Chilton. No vote is necessary and this becomes effective immediately. Cassidy informed Chilton that she is officially a Board member.

Cassidy asked Chilton to share about herself and her role with CICo. Chilton stated she is Canadian by birth but now holds three passports. Her husband is CFO for CICo but she didn't join him on the island until recently as she was caring for family. She took the position of head of Revenue Operations for CICo less than a month ago. Her previous experience was with a financial service company and her expertise is in team building. She was a former strategy consultant and worked for Ticketmaster and McDonalds gaining event experience. She lived in Napa Valley for ten years and was on the School Board there where she learned about the Brown Act.

Policy 2.9 Board Nominations & Elections Update—Cassidy requested discussion on the upcoming vote for the one vacant seat on the Board. She mentioned options like a ballot with all names and voting for four; a slate of the returning Board with a yes or no vote and a separate vote for the one empty seat; or allow incumbents to continue and only vote for the one vacant seat. Alkibay entered the meeting at noon. Discussion continued on the voting process and how the ballots should be made. It was decided to have a yes/no slate with the three incumbents willing to continue. If the majority is against, then all names will be placed on one ticket to choose four. If the slate passes, a second ballot will have new nominees vying for the one empty seat.

Recess at 12:06 for lunch

Return to Order at 1:01pm with all present

Policy 2.9 Extra Details—Cassidy brought back items requested at the last Board meeting: \$50K for visitor profile study, Zeck (board management service) and Visit California Outlook conference; total amount for budget, \$59,400. There was discussion on Zeck which Luttjohann said is a much lower cost, has helpful tools for building the Board packet, and is user friendly.

A motion to earmark \$59.4K in the budget by Fornasiere, second Hohenstein; passed unanimously

Policy 4.5.3 CEO Bonus Goals—Cassidy said this was brought to the Board in February. The Governance Committee decided to not make changes and approves the goals Luttjohann has been working to meet. Fornasiere reminded this is on a calendar year, not the fiscal year.

Motion to accept the CEO Bonus Goals as agreed by Bergman, second Upton; passed unanimously

Policy 2.3.2 CEO Monitoring—Luttjohann attended Seatrade with Maistros and Upton. He said this is the largest cruise conference in the world and felt this year was very effective. Reps from Catalina Island were in the Cruise the West booth and attended several meetings. There were some no-shows and they show as a strike-through in the Packet; the CITA team did not cancel any meetings. Cruise lines expressed interest in knowing of events on the island and would like notification to share with their guests. The on-line events calendar will be expanded and then shared with cruise staff. Helpful for crew and passengers, a one-sheet will be created showing where free WiFi, laundry, grocery store, etc. can be found. There were shore excursion discussions and Luttjohann will remind the execs via email of any additions. Royal Caribbean shore excursions did not make the meeting as scheduled, so the team were not able update them. Cassidy attended on her own expense because she felt it was important to represent. She would like funds to be set aside for Board to attend and offset their cost. Luttjohann said CITA pays FCCA baseline fees which allows members to attend. He said shore excursions look better for Disney; Carnival is not in need of excursions that hold large numbers and instead the numbers in the 10s but they are willing to negotiate fees with vendors. Upton agreed saying Carnival asked to work with her businesses and inquired about cost issues. She feels there is a need for more representation from Catalina Island at these events.

NATJA Conference and Trade Show will be attended by Luttjohann in May. He must join the CITA Board meeting remotely as he will be in Little Rock, Arkansas for the NATJA event. This conference also overlaps with CalTravel Advocacy Day in Sacramento so Fornasiere will represent there.

Care for Catalina Update—Luttjohann said they are awaiting funds for a second Olyns recycle machine. Care for Catalina is looking into ways to best integrate donations online.

360 Degree staff & leadership assessment—Luttjohann said the work plan fees are near what was budgeted. It will cost slightly more, but is okay.

Kind Traveler budget allocation/follow-up—Cassidy asked Luttjohann to recap the budget item held over from last meeting. Luttjohann believes the \$12K membership cost equates to value because their PR is good, the organization brings people to the island, and sustainable media put Catalina Island travel on the world stage. Luttjohann reminded the donation aspect comes back to the island. He clarified that CITA membership allows member businesses to join the program for \$500. There was discussion on donation funds and financial benefit to Catalina Island. Several believe membership might not be worth the cost. Hohenstein would rather the funds be spent on marketing or a TBID. Her hotel doesn't participate because the \$1 for all guests becomes \$70K per year and some guests are not interested. Beach likes the amazing social media work Stevenson does and doesn't see enough value in Kind Traveler membership. Upton said her business could pay directly to Bleu World and not go through Kind Traveler. Beach said three Avalon businesses currently participate in the Kind Traveler 'Every Adventure Gives Back' program. Two businesses were represented and said they would not pay \$500 per year to continue. Cassidy called for a vote on this budget item.

Motion to not fund CITA membership in Kind Traveler by Skelton, second Bombard; passed with abstentions from Upton and Beach

Marketing & PR Report—Miller did research on Reddit as promised last meeting, but doesn't recommend advertising there. She explained that the audience is younger and less affluent and their posts could skew the CITA brand and message. The PR efforts of CITA have been robust and diverse this year but a significant number of PR visitors were turned away. Miller thanked businesses for their donations mentioning recent and upcoming media and influencer visits. Chilton left the meeting at 1:55. Miller listed the pitches to date and said Connelly's second book, Ironwood, will have another map developed by CITA for readers to find locations. The current strategy is to put media visits on hold until fall. There was discussion on the direct ask to hotels and activities for PR/media visits and Miller shared about vetting and how decisions are made. Chilton returned to the meeting at 2:01. Miller reported that Stevenson represented CITA at the eTourism Summit. Stevenson was a featured presenter that showcased CITA's interactive destination work, including AI and interactive ads. At 2:04 Garcia left the meeting. Miller continued with CrowdRiff's AI content management, AI platform Wheel the World, Azira and Creative Inspiration. Bergman left the meeting at 2:05

Events Report—Cook is sad the Viva Catalina Mariachi Festival is cancelled and tickets were refunded. Garcia returned to the meeting at 2:07. Mariachi promoters were told CITA would be here for them in 2027. Cook's meeting tomorrow is for PADI's 60th Anniversary event. Mermaid Fest is progressing. Welham explained a fun addition of a mermaid/pirate themed ticketed event onboard a Catalina Classic Cruises (CCC) vessel. Cook announced CCC hopes to expand the idea to other events. Luttjohann reminded the evening onboard events will mean overnight stays. Bergman returned to meeting at 2:10. Cook said June 11 is a special events group meeting and will send information out. He spoke with Skelton about a Thursday night concert series for locals. The big cost will be hotel for bands and crew. These are free concerts in the summer at Catalina Horseback Adventure Ranch. Skelton and Cook are looking for sponsors, hotels and any other contributions. Cook said they are working on a country music festival in 2027 and that a dueling piano event is possible.

Hubert had a busy week. Shred Day was Monday and barged 144 boxes off the island to be shredded. On Wednesday, the Earth Day Trash Derby with 40 volunteers collected 768 pounds of trash. The Mixer tonight at IMMERSED will show "Butterfly Journey" in their facility. She said the Taste Around Avalon is May 28. Catalina Pride Celebration will have a pre-party on June 12 at Club Chi and continues all day, June 13. She requests emails from businesses wishing to participate. Hubert announced was successful in changing the ABBA concert to Aug 29 as requested. Fixers this month include the monthly Bleu World community clean-up and she is working on a Financial Literacy Workshop.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented four membership applications: Newport Aquatic Center, Catalina Curated Tours, Catalina Outdoor Adventure Club, and LARF dba Fantastic Catalina Race.

Motion to accept the four new members by Hohenstein, second Welham; passed unanimously

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Cassidy adjourned the Board meeting at 2:19pm.