



## **MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Thursday, January 18, 2024**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Chair Amanda Bombard. The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was held in the Founders Room of US Bank with in-person attendance only.

### **DIRECTORS PRESENT (14)**

Bombard, Fornasiere, Stevenson, Alkibay, Allen, Bradley, Cassidy, Foley, Garcia, Glass, Maistros, Paret, Vega, Wright

### **DIRECTORS ABSENT (4)**

Villalobos, Noll, Flathers, Hohenstein

### **STAFF PRESENT (4)**

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson

### **GUESTS (5)**

Yolanda Say, Lisa Beach, Levent Alkibay, Jeff Skelton, Ray McKewon

### **CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Chair Bombard announced there are a few changes to today's agenda. Luttjohann noted the excused absences on the agenda and provided a full list of additions and corrections. He noted that the financials have an error on the TOT line in November and December. He asked that the Board accept the reports as prelim and the correct and updated financials will be presented at the February meeting. He also mentioned a possible revisit to the mid-year budget at the February meeting. Bombard asked the Board to accept the financial reports as prelims with no vote needed until the final reports are presented next month.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

Chair Bombard asked for discussion and approval of Minutes from November 16, 2023

Approved with abstention by Glass and Garcia

Approval of November 2023 Monthly Financials

Prelims in packet with approval in February once final

Approval of December 2023 Monthly Financials

Prelims in packet with approval in February once final

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Annual Review & Contract Renewal for President & CEO—Bombard reported on Luttjohann's review in December 2023 by the Executive Committee. The committee granted a 3% salary increase and a bonus meeting guidelines of the CEO contract.

Excused Absences for Board Members—Villalobos and Hohenstein requested excused absences from the January 2024 meeting due to being out of the country; Noll requested an excused absence due to work conflict on January 18, 2024.

Approved unanimously

Paret requested an excused absence for November 2023 due to work conflict that was previously approved as the January 18, 2024 meeting.

Approved with abstention by Paret

Glass requested an excused absence for the October 2023 meeting due to a work conflict.

Approved with abstention by Glass

Garcia requested an excused absence for the November 2023 Board meeting due to illness.

Approved with abstention by Garcia

Cassidy requested an excused absence for the November 2023 meeting as she previously committed to an event for that day prior to being appointed to the Board.

Approved with abstention by Cassidy

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS**

President's Report—Luttjohann reminded that Kielpinski held an appointed seat for the Catalina Conservancy (CC) and that Whitney Latorre will fill that seat beginning in February. A vote is not necessary.

Luttjohann attended the plaque ceremony along with Board Members Maistros and Vega aboard Seaborne a premium/lux cruise line. He stated these high-end cruises have been sought for some time. Seaborne ships have a smaller passenger count and do not revisit as often due to longer itineraries. Fornasiere said an influencer onboard visited the Catalina Museum but commented to staff that Seaborne did not mention the museum. Vega stated the passengers were kind.

Bombard announced that Luttjohann has been honored with an invitation for consideration of joining NATJA's Advisory Board. This action requires the Board to vote to allow him to serve. The requirements of the position include: one zoom meeting per month and one annual meeting (generally held on the west coast of the USA but could be further).

Bombard believes his appointment may lead to a future annual NATJA conference being held on Catalina Island.

Motion to allow Luttjohann to accept the appointment to NATJA's Board by Stevenson, second Fornasiere.

Approved unanimously

Report on Concert Series Production RFP process— Ray McKewon was present for the RFP process selecting a new vendor for the Concert Series. McKewon announced in 2022 that he would retire in 2023. Several bidders applied and all but two presented a power-point presentation. The elimination process brought the number down to three contenders: Vinyl Jam, M&M and The Perfect Event. Interviews were presided over by Luttjohann, Villalobos, DeMyer, Warner and McKewon. The committee recommended awarding the contract to The Perfect Event for a period of three years beginning July 2024. The decision was close as all three were qualified but due to the challenge of island issues, The Perfect Event seemed the best choice. ABBA will be back due to its popularity. Luttjohann stated M&M made multiple visits to the island and contacted several businesses. They may be involved in future events and have several Hispanic acts.

Motion to approve The Perfect Event as the new contractor for the Concert Series by Garcia, second Glass.

Approved unanimously

Sales & Marketing Report—Fornasiere announced the 2024 Visitor Guide is available and each attendee should have received one today. The upcoming AAA mailing of this new Visitor Guide still has one spot left but a decision must be made asap as tomorrow is the deadline. She reported that a recording by Taimane Gardner will be used in the Cast Away ads. A 30-second and 15-second spot were both viewed on the meeting screen. The IPW 2024 Conference & Trade Show in Los Angeles will be attended by Love Catalina with Catalina Express. Fornasiere asked for Valentine and Leap Year offers to be sent immediately to Lynn or Michelle to be included in that promotion.

President's Report—Luttjohann reviewed his written report included in the packet. He stated the Care Fund revisit has been postponed to the March meeting at the request of Hohenstein. Placer AI is being implemented and a fine tune of the maps is currently the focus with the help of Warner and Miller. Stevenson asked about member access to this service. Luttjohann stated that a request is sent to Love Catalina and then a report can be printed and shared. If the information is used there is a request to give Placer AI recognition for the data. Miller stated the Placer AI manager will be on the island in the near future. At that time, she will ask if they could add a demo for members to understand all that is available. It is possible to build sample reports showing the possibilities.

Luttjohann requested thoughts of a member survey on the deer impacts. Bombard stated that in the CEO review it was a question for Luttjohann on how to prepare if the plan is approved by California Fish & Wildlife (CFW) as CC requested. She recommended an ad hoc committee to stay on top of the issue and have appropriate statements ready from Love Catalina. She continued that call center employees at Catalina Express have reported questions have gone quiet. Input sought today is if a survey should go out now to members or wait for a later date when media spotlights the issue once

again. Glass asked about the position of the Board and Bombard replied it is neutral. Stevenson feels the survey should wait because it has gone quiet for now and he feels it is best to not poke the bear. Maistros stated that even if the issue is approved by CFW it could be vastly different than the initial CC request. Cassidy would like to gather data and see how members are affected. She stated that Catalina Backcountry lost 30% of their total income due to a stop of the hunting program. She further explained the Aurora Hotel had 50 rooms cancelled that would have housed hunters. She also knows those individuals ate two meals a day in Avalon which accounts for 200 or more meals not served in local restaurants. Glass feels that being quiet on the issue means the Board condones the desired action of CC. Cassidy said the Board should address the issue and be ready. She would like to know who else in the community is affected and would like to ask the membership if the deer issue affects their business. Fornasiere warned a survey sent to members will also be shared with others. Bombard would like to create a committee, review the survey, and possibly make the survey more comprehensive beyond just the deer. She does not want CC to feel attacked, adding that today's agenda was created when it was believed that Latorre would be present at this meeting. Garcia would like to focus on what support can be given to members and see if businesses come up with new plans. Maistros would like to wait until the CFW ruling as it could be quite different from what CC requested. After CFW looks at options their decision might be acceptable. Glass is not worried about upsetting CC; he tried to get hunt tags and was told there were none. Wright has been assured that a decision will be made in a month as CC says that if CFW has not ruled by then they will postpone or put an end to their request. Fornasiere reported on a media request for archive information on the goats, which was similar. Luttjohann reminded, an ad hoc committee is open to any Board member wishing to join. Bombard asked those interested to contact Luttjohann to join the committee stating this discussion was important for the Board to address.

Events Report—Bombard commented on the amazing photos of the Christmas lights shared on social media. Luttjohann revealed that some items arrived too late for installation by City of Avalon (COA) employees, adding there will be more to see next year! He has been assured that the dark spots on the tree will be repaired or replaced by COA staff.

Luttjohann read from DeMyer's Event Report on Shop Catalina, the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual New Year's Eve Gala, Mixers, and Fixers. DeMyer thanked the 24 volunteers that decorated the ballroom and seated guests, and six Avalon High School Rotary Interact Students that inflated close to 1000 balloons for the midnight balloon drop. She also thanked Noll and Leo's Drugstore for the use of their air compressor. The event brought guests from 17 states with the furthest being from England. Tonight's Mixer is at Overlook Hall and it is not too late to sign up or just show up. The next Mixer is hosted by Akuario with a date change from February 15 to February 29. Upcoming Fixers include as Servsafe Class for managers, a free seminar for restaurant owners on new Health Dept Audits, a Shred Day either April 23 or 24, and a White's Landing Beach clean-up. All with confirmed dates to be announced soon.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented new membership applications for approval. Applications for Carnival Cruise Line and Bleu World are included in the packet.

Approval of New Member Carnival Cruise Line

Motion for approval Cassidy, second Fornasiere; passed unanimously

Approval of New Member Bleu World

Motion for approval Cassidy, second Fornasiere; passed unanimously

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Luttjohann reminded that correspondence is included in the Board Packet.

## **BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Fornasiere announced the Catalina Island Museum First Friday monthly event will become extended hours with a special cocktail available for purchase. On April 13 a new event is a Tamale Festival and other popular occasions like Cinco de Mayo will no longer be First Friday but stand-alone events. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary is still going with all exhibits being all Catalina; the Lasting Impressions painting gallery closes in March. Levent asked about the construction on the side of the museum. Fornasiere explained that storage is planned but the cost was higher than expected. There is ramp access to the second level from that area which will be landscaped with native plants until the storage can be built. She shared that the lobby space was split adding an upstairs room that still requires finishing touches. That new indoor space on the second level can be used for meetings, education, dance classes and events.

Cassidy stated the Fire Extinguisher company began its season with visits to businesses that will continue over the next 30 days. She announced, Backcountry has been sold.

Allen introduced his guest, Jeff Skelton who is bringing back horseback riding to the island. He is working with the Catalina Island Company and hopes by the next meeting to provide more information. They are working to be open this summer, there will be no boarding and will utilize the old stable location. He would like to hire locals as staff.

Maistros requested all thefts be reported to the Sheriff Department. Any video shared will be helpful. The investigation indicates one individual is involved and more evidence is sought as there have been several incidents.

Bombard reported the new reservation system for Catalina Express will be up January 24 along with a new website. She asked for the cooperation of commuters as their new program is all digital with a QR code on phones. Partners will be given a log-in to book their guest's travel on Catalina Express. Vega asked how this will be announced to the community. Bombard said there will be an ad in The Catalina Islander and emails to those traveling through March 31, 2024. Commuter books cannot be changed over to the new system until January 24 so the company is asking residents to be patient and allow extra time at the ticket window. Luttjohann offered to post a link on the Love Catalina 'get there' page. Bombard will share the needed information and asked if the information can be posted in the Thursday Update. Levent asked if all travel can be seen on the app and requested an update on the CARB deadline. Bombard said yes, booked travel will show. She continued that CARB legislation was approved with some extensions. Express submitted a grant application for a new boat. The deadline is different depending upon the tier of each boat. CARB understands the island impact and the Port of LA is supportive.

Wright asked about the Board Retreat location which has not been confirmed yet.

Luttjohann asked for those desiring weather updates to please sign up for the new eBlast list. These emails are being sent to a different list as some do not like their inbox receiving several weather alerts in a day.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Bombard adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.