



Thursday, June 18, 2026

MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:06pm by Chair Cinde Cassidy. The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was held in the Founders Room of US Bank with in-person attendance.

DIRECTORS PRESENT (19)

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

DIRECTORS ABSENT (0)

STAFF PRESENT (5)

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson, Cook

GUESTS (8) remote guests in italics

Tyler Wilson, David Hart, Steve Nornhold, Evan Nornhold, Alexander Shaw, Anni Marshall, *Ron Truppa, Xiomara Ferretti*

BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

Cassidy said six evaluation responses were received after the last meeting. She mentioned the Governance Committee directed Luttjohann to engage a 360 Review survey for administrative staff. She stated some in the room might receive an email that should not be treated as spam, and requested they complete the questions, if asked.

PRESENTATIONS

Hart gave a follow-up partnership presentation for the City of Avalon (COA) and CITA to share a mobile event screen. Hart also recapped his previous presentation given at the May Board meeting. He addressed why with six points, where and usage, when it could arrive, and financing. He listed many locations where it could be placed saying it can serve as a welcome sign, give directions, a schedule of events, show scores, live feed of entertainment, advertising, and more. Hart clarified the rules for showing licensed events. If funding is approved today, he hopes for delivery July 1 and in use July 4. The sales company has a unit on hold in Corona, California. They will provide service, promising to fix problems quickly. If COA and CITA partner on the screen it is \$36K each; COA would pay their portion upfront. CITA can pay or finance at \$7,200 per year including interest. A lease option costs \$10K per month, which is not feasible compared to the purchase price. Rental of the unit and advertising can subsidize the cost. Chilton asked about guidelines for ads and wondered if rules are the same as the street banners. Hart said the screen is more to announce and assist events with banner regulations pertaining to ads. Cassidy wanted assurance rental/ad income is split 50/50 between COA and CITA and would like to see COA take control of scheduling and training for use. Hart said COA will drop off and pick up, and bill renters for trained staff. Garcia did some math and said it would take 24 rentals each year at \$300 per rental to pay for the unit. Allen sees an advantage to advertising Two Harbors events at the ferry terminal. Welham reminded that date conflicts will require protocol; Luttjohann said first to request might be the best practice. Hart left the meeting.

Ron Truppa & Xiomara Ferretti were remote to request funding for Catalina Film Festival (CFF). Skelton left the meeting at 1:31. Truppa said he and his wife would present, but did not have slides or require screen sharing. Skelton reentered the meeting at 1:32. Truppa said they were requesting \$75K to fund CFF but would be willing to accept \$50K or \$25K. He

said his event needs \$10K today. If ten is available, more is needed and hopes are for additional funds later. Truppa said there are 12K film festivals and that his event is listed in the top 50. Lodging support is needed for stars, their agents and staff. CFF brings film makers and provides a reason to stay overnight, shop and eat. Truppa believes his September event brings cultural tourism in the shoulder season and gives prestige to Catalina Island. He said CITA has funded other events in the past, adding CFF doesn't want to be special but treated the same as others. CFF will document impact and report to CITA; he can provide numbers of past events. Alkibay asked about Catalina Film Institute (CFI) and wondered if it is related to CFF. Truppa said they are the same entity with CFF being an annual event and CFI conducting past workshops. Beach didn't know about the workshops and wondered if funding would support both or just CFF. Truppa stated they had trained and mentored some students in the past and he worked with Sean Brannock and Avalon Schools as well. He mentioned a donor who gave \$800K over many years and asked what COA did; Truppa answered, zero. Hohenstein requested a count of attendees, how many viewed each movie, and numbers for paid vs. free attendance and Truppa agreed to supply that information. Truppa sells 800 admissions each year and gives 200-250 comps. He feels this translates to 358 overnight stays but doesn't have a definitive number of actual overnight stays from film festival guests. Discounts at Hotel Metropole and from Steve Hoefs' businesses have been offered in the past. Bergman asked about earned revenue versus contributed revenue. Truppa said it costs \$110K to put on the event but that does not include attendees paying for boats and hotels. Bergman clarified she was asking about the classification of the funds for a non-profit. Truppa responded that 65% is earned (\$50K from film submissions, \$25-30K, ticket sales) the remainder is contributed and in-kind support. Further discussion from Bergman drilled down that contributed revenue was only \$15,000 to get to the \$110k total. Fornasiere said CITA would love to help promote but when submissions come in at the last minute it is difficult as it takes time to get the word out and have visitors book a trip. Truppa said his schedule hasn't changed for years and celebrity schedules are tough and they hold out until the last minute. Cassidy mentioned another board member wondered if CITA could establish a fund to subsidize hotel nights that guarantees overnight stays and keeps the money in Avalon. Truppa said he would love that because he has experienced hotels wanting funds in advance and a two-night stay, adding, costs are rising at CIVR and the theatre. Cassidy thanked them for their presentation. Truppa and Ferretti left the meeting.

Cassidy said there are two funding options to discuss and began with the Catalina Film Festival. There was discussion on availability of room nights in September. A few stated that September/October are still busy and the high season, and that their hotels were already booked before the CFF schedule and artists were announced. The idea of earmarking funds for local businesses was well-received. Board members commented: The 88 Film Freeway was Googled and CFF was not found in the top 88 (or 50 as Truppa claimed); META ads might be a better spend; other happenings bring the same number of visitors; CFF attendees stay at hotels, eat at restaurants, but mostly do not book activities other than films. A framework for grants that considers the goal to increase overnight stays, and building a policy and its process were recommended. It might be possible to assist event coordinators to find other funding or grant money. Legacy events were mentioned and Art Good was quoted as saying he was never financially disappointed with CITA and has never asked for funding, only promotion of JazzTrax. It was noted that CFF has received funding in the past from CITA whereas other legacy events have not. An example was given that the Catalina Art Association received funds many years ago, but after a few years was told there would be no more and were encouraged to stand on their own; that event continues annually. It was also pointed out that island entities organizing various events also face the same concerns and constraints in respect to costs associated with doing business on the island. After no further questions or comments, Cassidy asked if there was a motion to entertain funding at this time.

No motion was made and there was no further discussion.

At 2:21 Alkibay stepped out of the meeting.

Cassidy said the next discussion is for funding the event screen with COA. She forgot to ask Hart if there was a less expensive option. Maistros said there is but it is a much smaller screen. Flathers is concerned the technology will soon be obsolete, Wilson agreed. Alkibay returned to the meeting at 2:23. Cassidy asked Skelton if he would pay \$1,500 to rent the screen and he said no, but he would pay \$100-\$200. Garcia reminded that 24 events per year at \$300 breaks even in five years. Bradley is concerned about some locations mentioned, and does not like advertising as it could send patrons away from her business. Chilton reminded the Board to consider if the screen aligns with the goal of driving overnight stays, adding that rules and time limits are required. Fornasiere said the screen would follow protocols of a street banner.

Motion by Say to approve funding with conditions: COA to complete purchase; CITA reimburses COA over five years, one-half the purchase price (not to exceed \$36K) with annual installments from future TOT true-up funds; a required shared calendar for recording use; CITA pays no fees to utilize at its events; a rules of operation manual must be created; and a maintenance agreement is part of the purchase. Second Skelton, passed with abstention by Maistros

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The minutes from the May 14, 2026 Board meeting were presented for approval.

Motion for approval Bergman, second Garcia; passed with abstentions by Maistros and Upton
Welham left the meeting at 2:38

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Care For Catalina Funding discussion—Cassidy opened discussion on the decision to not pay Kind Traveler \$12K and to disperse the funds in-house and to local non-profits focused on sustainable tourism. Welham returned to the room at 2:40. Beach is 100% happy to have Care for Catalina vs. Kind Traveler even though she benefited from Kind Traveler funds. She recommends criteria be set up. In the interest time, Luttjohann said Care for Catalina will meet in September before the Board meeting.

Policy 2.8.2c Governance Committee Composition and policy 2.9 Board & Officer Nominations and Election—Cassidy requested agenda item 2.9 be presented first, followed by 2.8.2c. Fornasiere explained the ballots for the continuing Board seats. Paper ballots were passed out and collected. Garcia went out at 2:43. Cassidy and Johnson tallied the votes. Chilton left the meeting at 2:44.

A motion to approve the unanimous vote for Alkibay and Flathers to continue serving for a second term by Say.
Garcia returned to the meeting at 2:45. Second Bombard; passed unanimously
Chilton returned to the meeting at 2:46.

Fornasiere read statements for the three candidates: Bart Glass, Heather Milburn, Ben Villalobos. They vied for one empty Board seat. Discussion on the candidates was followed by a paper ballot vote. Ballots were collected and counted by Cassidy and Johnson with Villalobos receiving the majority.

A motion to approve Villalobos to fill the one empty seat by Bergman, second Ledebur; passed unanimously
The slate for the Governance Committee was presented with Beach as the only candidate interested to join as chair elect. Ballots with the incoming slate: Chair Fornasiere, Chair Elect Beach, Treasurer Alkibay, and Past Chair Cassidy were given out, collected, and then tallied by Cassidy and Johnson.

A motion to approve the unanimous vote for the Governance Committee Slate by Bombard, second Upton; passed unanimously

Policy 2.8.1c Board Committee Structure, Audit & Finance Committee appointments 26/27—Fornasiere asked if Alkibay, Bergman and Maistros are willing to serve on this committee for another year. They all agreed to do so. Cassidy asked if any others might be interested and hearing none, requested a vote.

A motion to approve the three above for the Audit & Finance Committee by Chilton, second Beach; passed unanimously
Maistros left the meeting at 2:58.

CEO Monitoring Policy 3.5 Financial Planning & Budgeting—Luttjohann presented the proposed budget included in the Board packet. Beach left the meeting at 2:59. Luttjohann explained his notes on the budget spreadsheet. Beach returned at 3:01. Luttjohann stated that \$10K earmarked for Otillo was approved to hold over, but the organization never got back with the necessary information and those funds now go back into the budget. Chilton requested clarity on the strategy due to costs being up and revenue down. Luttjohann said the Otillo funds bring revenue up and expenses are up due to new employees on the payroll. He added that on the cost side, he will shop or cut. He anticipates \$27K added sponsorship revenue in events geared to drive more overnight stays. There was discussion on Certified Folder, the Event Director position, the Visitor Guide print run, and seed money for new events vs. legacy events.

A motion to approve the Budget as presented by Fornasiere, second Upton; passed unanimously

The revised New Year's Eve contract was presented for discussion and approval.

A motion to approve the revised New Year's Eve contract by Bombard, second Garcia; passed with abstentions by Allen and Chilton

Marketing & PR Report—Miller gave printed copies of her Marketing Report in the interest of time. She spoke on the highlights announcing that AI has been launched on the Love Catalina site. She said Marina is attending Oxford and is presenting a Catalina Island report there. The Marketing Conference has been booked and Miller requested Board Members sign up early once it is announced in the Thursday Update.

Warner stated the map arrived on the island and passed copies to attendees. She extended the deadline for July 4th sponsorships saying any donation is welcome. The Trey Hill Concert is next weekend and she requested product donations for the raffle prize. The Mixer tonight is at Adventure Headquarters and a complimentary shuttle is available by the tour plaza on Catalina Avenue.

Events Report—Cook said the Mermaid Festival is gaining momentum and the Sirens Ball has been cemented. A sponsor for the triathlon turned down the event but Cook is looking for another. PADI postponed their 60th Anniversary to the following year. He has been working with interested parties on Plein Air and Catalina Sound Bath Festivals. He acquired a water sponsor and will receive canned water in reusable/recyclable containers that encourage people to refill and use them instead of one-time use plastic bottles. Cook has been working with Skelton on free summer concerts at the ranch on Thursdays. This will hopefully encourage local participation. Skelton said there will be line dancing and liquor sales. He said more sponsors mean better bands. His hope is that visitors will arrive on Thursday for the weekend, staying an extra night. At 3:32 Bombard and Welham left the meeting.

Luttjohann said the Pride's event contractor, Jared, did an amazing job. The event was well attended and garnered presentations from dignitaries that are on display in the room. He said the Annual Installation Meeting will be at El Encanto Catalina in July.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented a membership application for El Encanto Catalina.

Motion to accept the new member by Skelton, second Hohenstein; passed unanimously

GUEST & MEMBER UPDATES

Cassidy stated this is her last meeting as Chair. She is proud to have created communication between COA and the Board. She thanked Board Members for their participation noting that two meetings had 100% attendance. She received a round of applause.

Fornasiere said the Catalinaville fundraiser for Catalina Island Health is August 1 with limited sponsor tables. She congratulated Luttjohann on his Pride Celebration work and a proclamation received from Senator Gonzalez.

Ledebur announced a Conservancy Speaker Series at the Trailhead. He also said two Avalon students received paid internships.

Bergman is happy the Catalina Museum for Art and History has an international intern for 90 days.

Allen said the Beach BBQ this weekend at the Isthmus will be serviced by the Cyclone.

Shaw announced the Flyer is making three trips each weekend and extra ferry runs from Newport Beach on weekdays. He also said a smaller boat has been chartered on Monday for the US Soccer team and their families and will arrive at 10:30.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Cassidy adjourned the Board meeting at 3:39pm.