



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

**Thursday, May 15, 2025**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Chair Dave Stevenson. The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was held in the Founders Room of US Bank with in-person and remote attendance. Remote attendance as posted on the agenda: Alkibay at 647 N. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514; Latorre at 320 Golden Shore, Suite 220, Long Beach; Villalobos at 6075 S. Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89119.

**Google Meet joining info/video call link was posted on the agenda**

### **DIRECTORS PRESENT (11)**

Stevenson, Bombard, Cassidy, Beach, Bergman, Bradley, Flathers, Glass, Paret, Say, Upton

### **DIRECTORS ATTENDING REMOTELY VIA GOOGLE MEET (2)**

Alkibay, Latorre **(Villalobos unable to attend from Las Vegas location due to transportation delays)**

### **DIRECTORS ABSENT (6)**

Allen, Garcia, Maistros, Vega, Villalobos, Wright

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

Luttjohann, Warner, Johnson, DeMyer

### **GUESTS (Remote guest in *italic*) (10)**

Tyler Wilson, Jeff Skelton, Heather Milburn, Rixie Serpas, Nicole Hohenstein, Greg Carson, Alex Herron, Yifei Ye, Cassie Stark, *Lynn Stevenson*

### **PRESENTATION**

After guests introduced themselves, Stevenson turned the floor over to the 62Above team for their Paid Media presentation. Carson and Ye provided their PowerPoint slides on the screen. At 1:03 Alkibay came on-line to attend. Carson pointed to the hand-out available at each place, Digital Media Key Terms. Carson explained VIA62 is built on Viant and tracks potential visitors for 60 days after viewing a CITA ad. Glass and Lynn Stevenson entered the meeting at 1:05. The VIA62 program was engineered by 62Above and can track visitors beginning with a banner view, through a series of ads, to arrival at a hotel stay. Connected TV (CTV) is attributed to the success of VIA62 and the numbers it provides. Their presentation included banner ads, CastAway and Tis the Season campaigns, charts, graphs, along with single image and paid social carousel ads. Ye stated the graph numbers could change as the 60-day window to look back at March and April is still open. Carson said META cannot be tracked by VIA62 but ads on META social media platforms are essential. Ye continued with a foot traffic/island visit explanation and described impressions/visits. Bombard asked if data provides whether the visitors stay for 24 hours. Carson said VIA62 only tracks overnight stays. Ye is encouraged by the numbers and said CTV prospecting is 98% higher than the industry standard. CTV ads translate to a cost of \$2.53 per visitor. As VIA62 belongs to 62Above, Ye is constantly checking data and she said the program is fully transparent. Carson explained they use the term Black Box for Epsilon and others where they can't see tracking. He said a constant refresh shows results post engagement. Ye is impressed with the reactions and comments to paid social carousel and single image ads. Carson reminded these are ads and most ads do not garner comments or reactions on social media platforms. Cassidy requested their presentation be sent to the board. Stevenson urged the Board to go over this information again once it is sent.

## **BOARD CHAIR REMARKS**

Stevenson remarked on the possible effect several hotel closures may have to lower TOT funds. He said that each year the island survives May Gray and June Gloom. The current economy is a bit topsy-turvy which conveys unknowns, but as in the past, this might prove good for Catalina Island. He said AVX will give a presentation at the June meeting.

## **BOARD CHAIR ELECT UPDATE**

### **2.8.1 Appointment of Audit Finance & Oversight Committee**

Chair Elect Cassidy reminded that the annual audit commences in August and ends in November with the presentation to the City of Avalon (COA). The committee is comprised of Alkibay as treasurer and two or more others appointed by Cassidy. She is looking for volunteers and hearing none asked if Paret would serve. He declined saying it was too much Bandwidth for him. Bergman and Latorre stepped forward as volunteers. Cassidy requested a motion for approval of this committee.

Glass made a motion to approve Alkibay, Bergman and Latorre as the committee members, second Bombard; passed unanimously.

### **2.9.6 Nominating Committee Progress Report, Solicitation of Officers**

Cassidy said the committee did not convene and that some volunteers left the committee. Remaining team members are Cassidy, Bombard, Garcia, Beach, and Bradley. There is a need to fill four board seats; Wright declined a second term. This year there are more nominations than normal and the committee will find time to meet. Currently Nicole Hohenstein, Heather Milburn, Jeff Skelton, Julie Glass, and Maria Leyva have been nominated as Board candidates. Glass left the meeting at 1:45. Cassidy announced that Vega and Say were nominated for the Governance Committee with an additional nomination expected. She explained the qualifications for the Governance Committee and would like to hear from any Board Member interested in that role. Cassidy said the Board Matrix is ready and though it is not mandatory it will help build a well-rounded board. Glass returned to the meeting at 1:48. Cassidy asked, please, for Board Members to complete the Matrix with or without their name. Stevenson thanked Bombard for her service years and agreeing to an allowed extension of her term as determined in a previous meeting.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

Stevenson sought approval for the April 2025 minutes included in the packet. Hearing no discussion or questions, he requested a motion.

Motion approving the Minutes from April 22, 2025 by Say, second Glass; passed with an abstention by Beach.

## **FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ACTIVITIES**

Luttjohann asked if Alkibay, attending online, had additional comments. Alkibay stated the financials as included in the packet with Luttjohann's notes were sufficient. Luttjohann explained the over-budget expense was preapproved by a Board action or was within his range of approval.

Cassidy made a motion to approve the Q1 and year-to-date financials, second Beach; passed unanimously.

## **CEO/ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

### **1.4 The Value & Role of Tourism**

Luttjohann said there was nothing negative to report.

### **3.5 Financial Planning & Budgeting Notes w/report in June**

Luttjohann is working on comparisons to Catalina Island competition and whether the island is doing better than counterparts on the mainland. He mentioned the closed hotel properties might lower TOT funds but estimates for the new fiscal year indicate a higher number of overnight visitors so far. He stated the reserve account must have enough funds to cover unredeemed gift certificates and to pay final balance on the sound system for Crescent Avenue that had funds approved in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Special events for the current fiscal year are over budget due, in-part, to one concert date moving to June 2025 for talent availability. There is a possibility of cuts like Placer, employee health insurance, and advertising dollars. Say asked if the paid TOT estimate is over, would COA require payment back of those funds. Luttjohann said they could, but in the past COA lowers the next year's monthly payments. He added TOT is in place due to a voter initiative and Say wanted to know if that is forever. It is, Luttjohann informed, unless changed by the voters and that could go either way.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented the new membership application for Catalina Camp at White's Landing. Stevenson requested a motion and vote.

Motion for approval Bombard, second Say; passed unanimously.

The Hispanic Business Alliance (HBA)—Luttjohann explained the cruise ship moving dates caused the HBA meeting to be cancelled this month.

Events Update—DeMyer reminded of the Mixer tonight, 6-8pm at Hotel Metropole's Beach House, and said on June 19 the Mixer will be at Catalina Xtreme Parasail. A location of the July 17 installation dinner is still being considered. The May Taste Around Avalon has 14 confirmed participants with a few others expressing interest. The cards will be sold for \$2 each May 28 at the Visitor Center and for \$3 each on May 29. Catalina Pride hotel stays and events are being finalized. Fixers in the works include ServSafe and others that are on-line training. Cassidy asked if voters for the Taste must buy a taste. DeMyer said yes, a card must be stamped by that establishment for a vote to count.

### **MARKETING UPDATE**

Miller announced that Ciao! by San Pellegrino has partnered with CITA to promote their new premium sparkling water brand. The program will be marketed via social and digital communication channels as well as customized point of sale (POS) materials featured at all Ralph's grocery stores on the west coast. The POS materials will include Love Catalina's logo and island imagery, plus a QR code to enter to win a trip to Catalina Island. The program is estimated to have a media value of \$400K with great brand exposure for Catalina Island. Ciao! has committed to donating 3K cans for the upcoming Catalina Pride event.

CITA and Michael Connelly are collaborating with the author's team and publisher to promote his new book, Nightshade. Preorders will receive a free gift of a downloadable map of Avalon with book locations. CITA will receive a list of subscribers that opt-in to receive Love Catalina's newsletter. Social posts, newsletter promotion, CITA's consumer eBlast list and more collaborate for a promoted post to 350K followers on Instagram.

Catalina Island was voted #3 best summer travel destination for the second year in the USA Today Readers' Choice Awards. The island was beat out by Mackinac Island, MI and Ocean City, NJ.

The annual photo award in Westways magazine offered a Catalina Island prize package. Miller thanked the partners that provided products for the prize. She also eyed an ad for Catalina Express in the publication.

Miller mentioned recent hosted media on the island, and included today and trips in April, May, and June. Yesterday, Alex Biston filmed a Let's Go Places segment for KCAL/KCBS which highlights southern California experiences. This content will be edited into multiple two- or three-minute segments to air over separate weeks. Featured will be horseback riding and an interior tour.

The annual pocket map is completed and at the press with 175K printing. Warner requested a portion be delivered to the island before Memorial weekend; scheduled delivery is the week of May 26.

### **BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Bombard likes that weather looks more positive this weekend for the Avalon Ball. She displayed a rendering of the new Catalina Express Tier 4 vessel. The new boat will be 29 feet longer, looks similar to the Jet and will hold 525 passengers. Contracts are being finalized and building will take two years. The vessel will operate on renewable fuel and CARB hopes to prove Tier 4 is better for the environment. CARB and the Port of Los Angeles are partnering with Catalina Express on the build. She said April forecasting for Catalina Express was strong with numbers up 13% from last year; May is looking healthy.

Beach is excited to partner Scuba by Design with Catalina Express at the May 31-June 1 Scuba show. This show is historically based in Long Beach, but last year was held in LA. For 2025 it returns to Long Beach and is open to the public. Dive destinations from around the world will be represented.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 2:22pm.