



MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, October 19, 2023

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, Noll, Allen, Bradley, Flathers, Hohenstein, Kielpinski, Maistros, MacGugan-Cassidy, Paret, Thomas, Vega, Wright

DIRECTORS ABSENT (5)

Stevenson, Villalobos, Foley, Glass, Teng

STAFF PRESENT (4)

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson

GUESTS (3)

Ray McKewon, Tyler Wilson, Yolanda Say

Chair Bombard began with a heartfelt expression of love for Janet DeMyer asking those in attendance to sign a card that will accompany a gift. This cozy blanket is given to remind Janet of warm and caring thoughts sent from the Board during her battle with breast cancer.

CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of Minutes from September 28, 2023

Motion for approval Kielpinski, second Fornasiere; passed with abstention by Hohenstein

Approval of September 2023 Monthly Financials

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Bradley; roll-call vote passed with all ayes

PRESENTATION

Presentation: Xceptional Music, Catalina Concert Series final report—Ray McKewon reviewed his history providing music to Catalina Island including Descanso Beach Castaway concerts, Buccaneer Days and more. There were three acts scheduled for the 2023 Summer Concert Series but Mick Adams and the Stones was cancelled due to weather.

McKewon stressed community sponsorship is necessary to continue these free concerts. Venice was the first group this summer and they brought people to the island; with a large following, visitors came specifically to see them. McKewon presented a few videos showing their performance. There was a \$7K rebate for the missed concert, but this was not the total cost; engineering and other expenses were already incurred prior to cancellation. The ABBA tribute band included three new players this summer. The ABBA videos showed the crowd singing and dancing enthusiastically to the music. He addressed concert economics, the beer garden and praised DeMyer and Mary Boyd for a successful raffle. McKewon reminded the board that the TOT money must be used for promotion and music, stressing the wording is AND, not or. Expenses include licenses, music rights and insurance; McKewon has not charged for equipment. Previously concerts generated an enhanced visitor experience but not necessarily a draw—now visitors plan their travel to match the ABBA or Venice performances. He believes an unforgettable concert experience is an economical way to achieve return visitors as three out of four are on the island for the first time and positive travel circumstances convert to revisits. An RFP has gone out seeking a new vendor for the summer concert series. McKewon recommends the price be increased, utilization of Venice and ABBA, and the Pride celebration be the same vendor. Xceptional Music is willing to supply

groups from their roster (Stones, Highwayman, Woodstock, Santana Ways and Xceptional Country). He suggests, if the producer chosen is not The Perfect Event that the Catalina Island Company add them to the list.

Bombard asked if there were questions for McKewon. Noll asked about typical margins and McKewon feels 20% is desired. Bombard wondered what cost CITA should expect to pay. McKewon recommends the board allow Luttjohann to entertain \$40-45K to gain a good professional producer. He revealed the RFP specifies the current expenditure at \$35K and that CITA will look favorably upon those not needing an increase. He advised, sponsors are another way to defer the costs, mentioning Carl Jordan of US Bank stepped up and sponsored Pride this year. Hohenstein informed that Rotary discussed their participation in the beer garden and feels it is too much work; they would not split the proceeds in the future if operating the beverage sales. She also asked the producer, stick to the agreed upon rooms because it is tough to give up additional discounted rooms in the summer. Cassidy offered an idea of smaller hoteliers donating funds into a pool to use toward rooms. This might allow for bands to stay at the same property and one hotel would not be the lone contributor. Kielpinski asked who would work as hard as McKewon for only \$2K. McKewon revealed Catalinaville alone is \$25K and if the producer picks up other events (8-10) the profit balances out. Bombard suggested not bringing bands on a holiday weekend when the boats and town are already full. McKewon reminded the shoulder season has a risk of weather. Luttjohann said Labor Day weekend has not been full and that was why ABBA was booked then. Hohenstein believes the weekend prior to Labor Day is better for ABBA as it's been bad for hotels. McKewon will do his best to help the new producer become a success. Luttjohann said from a budget standpoint there is time and previously the board gave direction on the amount to be spent. He reminded the RFP is out but proposed costs must wait for evaluation of the RFPs returned to CITA.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Excused Absence for Ponce—Ponce requested an excused absence from the June 2023 meeting due to a City Conference conflict.

Motion to approve an excused absence by MacGugan-Cassidy, second Noll; passed unanimously

Resignation of Teng—Bombard announced Teng is leaving the Zane Grey and the island to be with family which means he must vacate his board seat. Luttjohann asked for the Nominating Committee to reconvene and solicit nominations. Bombard requested if others wish to join the committee to please let Dave Stevenson or Luttjohann know.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Audited Financials Delayed—Luttjohann planned to present the audited financials at this meeting but it is not possible. Melissa is missing critical documents and has not been able to complete the audit. Luttjohann would like to hold a special meeting to present those financials prior to submitting to the City Council. One possibility is the day of the marketing conference, earlier in the day. Luttjohann will update the board after receiving the audited financials.

Update on Bylaws Amendment—Luttjohann thanked those that returned their ballots. He stated one member noticed a change was not included. The attorney was asked to review what was sent out and advised a new ballot be resent. It does not need a 30-day window for reply; there can even be a specific day for voting. The ballots received will be sent back with a watermark and explain why this happened.

Motion to recast the ballot by Paret, second Hohenstein; passed unanimously

President's Report—Luttjohann deferred to the submitted written report included in the packet. He explained that he's working on a quarterly competitive set report instead of annual; the options currently are monthly or annual. Bombard mentioned 2022 can't be used as a comparison. Hohenstein believes 2019 was solid and good for comparison but Kielpinski asked why 2023 can't be used to compare. Bombard replied Catalina Express needs a full year.

Marketing Report—Fornasiere announced the Tis the Season campaign begins November 1 as the Second Summer promotion ends October 31. The annual Marketing Conference is at TopSide on Thursday, November 16 beginning at 11:30 with lunch included. Fornasiere reminded, we are on this Board for marketing and this is THE meeting. Presentations by experts will be quite informative. This allows attendees to go back to their businesses with a better understanding of the marketing decisions. Miller will email the marketing conference information again with a link to sign up. The 2024 Visitor Guide advertisement goal was \$175K and Fornasiere proclaimed Warner did well because she reached \$186K. The advertising deadline has passed and ads must be paid now. A member proof will be ready

November 20-30 at the Visitor Center or request a digital copy. After an RFP for printing, Denver was chosen and they will print in early to mid-January.

Events Report—Luttjohann reported for DeMyer reading her written report. The last Triathlon will be October 28 with 227 participants; A possible replacement event is a gravel ride. Sign-ups are being accepted for Shop Catalina which kicks off December 2. The Jingle Singers will perform at 4:30 on the stage and other activities are planned. The new Crescent Avenue sound system and holiday lighting will debut at this time. The 50th Annual New Year's Eve Gala has 417 attendees signed up; volunteers are still needed for decorating and seating. Mixer tonight is at Avalon Fire Dept. The Komen Breast Cancer Walk is on October 29. Say wished to thank the town for their support and reminded how often in our small community we have friends and family affected by Cancer. She also thanked Catalina Island Health for the care her grandson received before transport to CHOC for treatment. Luttjohann reported the Mixer in November will be at the Catalina Museum. He said Otillo staff has experienced significant turnover but plans a return to the island for a fall 2024 event. Kielpinski revealed originally Otillo preferred to begin at Two Harbors and end in Avalon but it was believed to be too challenging. The upcoming course has been modified with beginners competing in the Two Harbors area only but advanced teams will start at Two Harbors and progress to Avalon for the finish.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Hohenstein reported on the dropped memberships and for those responding provided their reasons. She also stated a few expressed an interest in continuing but payment has not been received. No new members presented for approval at this meeting.

CORRESPONDANCE

Luttjohann noted that the Board Packet includes a letter sent to the US Bureau of Reclamation. Edison is seeking grant money, since that does not get paid back and would not raise rates, it seemed a good idea to support their appeal.

BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Fornasiere reported the Catalina Museum's newest documentary will be premiere on Saturday, October 21, 6:30-8pm; a feature on Jay Guion. She requested suggestions for the next documentary to be submitted. November 1 the annual Día de los Muertos Family Festival will be celebrated with live music, food, Tequila tasting and participation from the community. The Museum is looking forward to hosting the Mixer in November. On December 16, the Loyola Marymount choir will return and perform a free holiday concert.

Allen announced a Two Harbors Thanksgiving meal. The Cyclone will run to transport people to and from Avalon.

Hohenstein shared that the Rotary Chili Cookoff was the best ever! Rotary events raise scholarship money for locals. This year three students are going back to RYLA as lead counselors after attending due to Rotary sponsorship. Raffle tickets are still available and there are great prizes.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Hohenstein requested that the Kind Traveler and an associated 501c3 Care Fund be readdressed. She was absent at the last meeting where it was tabled for a year and would like to bring it back sooner for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Bombard adjourned the meeting at 2:10pm.