



Wednesday, October 15, 2025

MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:02pm 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 (14)

Cassidy, Alkibay, Stevenson, Fornasiere, Beach, Bombard, Bradley, Flathers, Hohenstein, Leyva, Maistros, Say, Skelton, Welham

DIRECTORS ABSENT (5)

Allen, Bergman, Garcia, Latorre, Upton

STAFF PRESENT (4)

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson

GUESTS (6)

Heather Milburn, Rixie Serpas, Jocelyn Francis, Maddy Scanlon, Chelsea Fulghum, Tyler Wilson

PRESENTATION

Jocelyn Francis from City of Avalon (COA) gave a report on the Municipal Solid Waste Program assisted by a slide presentation. She stated COA owns the 7.7-acre dump located in an unincorporated portion of LA County. COA contracts with CR&R to process trash, recyclables, and green waste. Trash is added to the landfill but recyclables are shipped off the island. Recyclable products must be placed in a recycle bin to be processed and sent to a recycling center on the mainland. If recycle materials are in a waste bin, they are added to the landfill. There are seven tons of waste generated per day, which is low when compared to other mainland areas. Max capacity at the landfill will be reached in a few years. A proposal to extend its lifespan includes the creation an 18-foot earthen wall allowing more storage of trash. If approved, this could extend the life of the dump approximately 20 years. LA County needs to complete an ecological study; landfills are heavily regulated and the proposal is still in the public hearing stage. An optimistic time frame is to begin October 2026 with building 1/3 of the wall. If the project is done in thirds every two years, immediate cost increases would be lower. Francis discussed the Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) purchased by COA; OLYNS is placed outside Vons market. COA plans to add more machines and is working with OLYNS on how users can have their funds go as a donation to non-profits. Ads displayed on the machine allow COA to re-coop costs of operation. Hohenstein asked if CR&R was losing money as formerly bottles placed in the trash were recycled by their organization and those funds were income for CR&R. She wondered if this loss meant CR&R was not motivated to keep the RVM in working order. Francis agreed they received CRV funds, but CR&R no longer needs to sort and clean as the machine collects clean containers and sorts them so they are ready to ship. This saves labor for CR&R which gives no incentive to allow the machine to remain in non-working order. Cassidy asked why staff at the landfill are no longer sorting through trash. Francis said that operation was shut down during COVID and then state laws changed placing responsibility on the consumer, not the landfill, to recycle. Francis mentioned the Hungree app; businesses and individuals can donate food that is still good to those in need. She reminded of the COA bulky item event on October 25, 8am-noon. Anyone can drop tires, e-waste, furniture, etc. She provided some contact information for CR&R, COA, and the website calrecycle.ca.gov/greenbusiness for more information. Francis mentioned the Epicenter Art Opening on Sunday, October 19 at 3pm to dedicate the sculpture in Old Ben Park. This is a temporary installation traveling coastal cities and will be in Avalon through the first week of January 2026. Luttjohann asked about camping fuel containers which are often collected at the Visitor Center and is concerned about batteries. Francis said the COA lobby has a drop for spent batteries. Cassidy said Chet's

Hardware is willing to reinstate collecting of camping fuel, batteries, and light bulbs if COA could prompt CR&R to make weekly pick-ups. Hohenstein announced another Rotary clothing drive in April to recycle used clothing for those in need on the mainland.

BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

Cassidy welcomed all new Board members adding she didn't mean to neglect returning members at the last meeting. She reported the new Board Member Orientation was held earlier today.

Cassidy asked Beach to provide an update on her Scuba by Design business. Beach is passionate about reaching out to the disabled community, those afraid to swim, as well as individuals wishing for a more concierge-level experience. She works with Journeyable for accessible travel and Kind Traveler for awareness of environment and ocean conservation. Her business offers a free dive for low-income residents, at-risk youth, AVID, on birthdays, etc. for those certified or uncertified. They request a 24-hour notice to participate in a free dive.

Cassidy then had Leyva share about the business she represents, Leyva's Electric Bikes. Leyva said her family's eBikes location also offers fully-guided eco tours to the interior with several different options of one hour or more. She mentioned other non-member businesses: Coyote Joe's restaurant and Pete's Cafe that offer daily specials and their retail stores offer a 10% discount for locals.

Cassidy is thankful for six evaluation responses received for the September meeting. She requested that all Board members complete the Conflict of Interest and Gift policy form available today.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Luttjohann presented the September 18, 2025 Board Minutes for approval.

Motion for approval Fornasiere, second Stevenson; passed with abstentions by Hohenstein, Skelton and Welham.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Policy 2.8 Board Committee Structure (Nominating Committee)—Cassidy explained that at the June meeting there were more nominations than seats to fill. It was difficult to convey to the Board the candidates believed to be most beneficial. Luttjohann informed, the 2.8 policy (and 2.9) included in the packet indicates edits with strike-out text. Cassidy proposes any Board member can nominate a business member as a candidate and self-nomination is to be allowed. A form will be completed by each candidate. For the Board vote, candidates will step out of the room for discussion, voting, and the tally of ballots by the chair and minute taker; chair-elect will verify the count. Luttjohann added if three positions are open the top three votes would be elected to the seats. Fornasiere would like to focus on incoming Board members that represent a missing business type. Hohenstein requests the candidate form explain the Board's purpose is to support CITA and not bad mouth the organization. Say agreed and said Board members are here to support all businesses, not just their own. Beach recommended the optional submission of a resume, allowing candidates to provide extra background information not necessarily included on the form. Skelton believes a resume could be especially helpful for newer community members with unknown qualifications. Fornasiere noted a duplicate line at the end of the presented document and wondered about a quorum for a vote when nominees leave the room. It was explained, the quorum is established at the beginning of the meeting, if some leave during a vote, the quorum remains intact.

Motion for approval of the new 2.8 policy with the strike-outs and edits as discussed by Beach, second Bradley; passed unanimously

Policy 2.9 Board and Officer Nominations and Elections—The edits as strike-outs were noted in the previous discussion with no further questions.

Motion for approval of the edited 2.9 policy included in the packet by removing the strike-outs by Beach, second Fornasiere; passed unanimously

Events Report—Luttjohann announced four finalists are part of a second round of interviews for the Event Director position and then two or three will be chosen for in-person interviews. He stated Event Manager DeMyer made the decision to retire which may add or subtract duties for the new Event Director position. This places more urgency on filling the new position with upcoming Shop Catalina and New Year's Eve. Luttjohann noted his existing staff have taken over some event duties in addition to regular tasks, placing a strain on work schedules. Especially stepping up is Warner working on the 2026 Visitor Guide while tending to many event needs. Warner received a round of applause.

Luttjohann provided a sales update on the New Year's Eve gala saying there are nine less reservations than last year at this time. He noted a planning meeting for the inaugural book festival possibly in February and offered Mermaid stickers to promote the inaugural Mermaid Festival this month. Luttjohann reminded of tonight's Mixer at The Avalon Theatre and said November does not have a Mixer host if any business is interested.

Maddy Scanlon from The Perfect Event reported on the 2025 Concert Series. She was honored to take over from Ray McKewon two years ago and likes feedback. McKewon was passionate and Scanlon would like to continue to make the free concerts amazing. She provided video recaps of the events with crowd and band shots. The three bands for the 2025 summer season were: the country trio, Trey Hill; Knyght Ryder, an 80s cover band with a Long Beach following; and ABBA, always a favorite with returning visitors excited for this concert. Scanlon is concerned ABBA band being larger, requires 11 rooms and boat tickets, which makes it harder to service their needs. For the 2026 Concert Series, Scanlon prefers to set the concert dates and then find bands with availability. She would like to see more off-island promotion. Some ideas for sponsorship were presented to assist with funding. Cassidy said a funding vote will take place at the November meeting and thanked Scanlon for her presentation.

Marketing & PR Report—Miller provided an update on the Second Summer campaign, Sept 2-Oct 31. She reported 8,974 visitors can be directly tracked to the recent efforts. As of October 10, are those exposed to this media in September. Being only 10 days into the lookback window, the number will increase. Notably, almost half of the total visits (4,476) originated from Connected TV. This figure is expected to rise as tracking continues for 60 days after the initial ad exposure. Tis the Season campaign is set to launch on November 3 with messages about Shop Catalina, Best of Winter visits and New Year's Eve. New spots were created, including 15- and 30-second commercials. Content has been provided for the Visit California newsletter on Catalina Island Takeover scheduled for November 4. Promo for Shop Catalina will be with LOCALE this year with plans to appear in print, digital and social media. Media releases are planned for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. Miller requests information on business offerings including holiday dinners and winter season hours of operation. The upcoming IMEX convention will include some focus on incentive and small meeting trips to Catalina. KTLA will cover the Mermaid Festival later this month. The 'As Seen By AI' project and chatbot is in the test process with content to be shared at the November Marketing Conference. The annual conference is planned for November 13, 11:30am-3pm at Catherine's Terrace. Intentful will share about AI and how it's impacting website design and search, there will be a panel discussion, and other presenters. Warner shared she is busy working on the 2026 Visitor Guide and a variety of events.

Audit & Financial Oversight Committee Update—Alkibay said the audited financials are delayed a month. The 2024-25 annual audit on-site visit was completed October 3 and the auditors have not had time to finish final documentation.

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented a membership application for Catalina Kid Ventures saying they are returning members after a hiatus and new leadership.

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

GUEST & MEMBER UPDATES

Skelton announced Catalina Island Horseback Adventures has a new mini horse, Cracker Jack (brother to Peanut). He said some of their smaller horses were sent to Arizona and they received more and larger horses for a one-year contract. Bigger horses allow larger riders to be accommodated. Skelton announced he is married as of last weekend and their location can be used as an event space or photo shoot.

Fornasiere said during the Komen Walk, Catalina Island Health promoted the mobile mammogram unit which screened 79 (an increase over previous year). She is working to bring a resource fair in mid-November with family activities. She is also hopeful to return the Health Fair as a community event.

Bombard said 18-19 welders are ready to cut aluminum for the new Catalina Express vessel. She could possibly work in a FAM trip to the new boat for those attending the Visit California Outlook Forum.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Cassidy adjourned the Board meeting at 3:04pm.