

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association
Minutes
Conference Call
June 24, 2020

Board Members in attendance: David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, Zale Schuster, Jodie Nelson (BLM), Holly Gant (PBLSA)

Board Members absent: John Brass, Ryan Cooper (BLM)

Others present: John Hodge (BLM), Jesse Pluim (BLM), Veronika Kocen (BLM intern)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Announcements: Jesse Pluim works in BLM Public Affairs Sacramento office and has been appointed the interim park manager position. Thank you to Veronika as our resident naturalist and keeping the volunteers engaged via email and Facebook.

Approval of agenda: *Approved with consensus*

Secretary report- *M/S/P minutes of May 27, 2020, approved.*

Treasurer's report- See report. BLM audit was received and Harry compiled a succinct response. Jim is disappointed with BLM's approach with the audit and appreciates Harry's efforts. He asked if there's something simple to use to determine what is and is not acceptable in the future. Harry said we already categorize expenses and it came down to interpretation. BLM wants to categorize things a certain way and how monies fit into a bucket and there was no discussion about it before the audit. Harry is disappointed with the tone it set and the lack of context in Megan's comments. PBLSA has had 12 years of solid practice with the books without comment and she implied that we don't know what we're doing which is insulting. Jim was disappointed that this caused a lot of work for Harry and PBLSA and we dealt in good faith that what we were doing was correct. David added some history- Jack Morehead worked with BLM to create a streamline arrangement for procurement of our contract and Harry has done an excellent job. David questioned Jodie and John H. on whether BLM understands that if we were required to go back to the previous practice it would paralyze our simple system and overwhelm our human resources. John H. said the audit goes through deficiencies and there was no intent to hurt feelings. We'll have to sit down and figure out what changes will need to be made and procedures going forward. Learning curve will be hard and the onus doesn't fall on the PBLSA but on the former and current management, but these are federal funds that we are held accountable for. John, Jodie and Jesse will take the lead moving forward.

GS report- See report. Holly is working on a possible Etsy store. Even though they take 8% in fees, it may be a good way to gain more exposure. Harry cautioned about tax implications.

BLM report- See report. Great American Outdoors will spend \$650M on projects between NPS and BLM and they are compiling a list of projects (ex. keepers cottage and facility maintenance).

FSB- No report.

Tower- See report.

Power lines- See report.

Capital Campaign- See report.

Old Business:

Lens Report - Zale sees this as 2 projects: the lens and its issues, and the enclosure and its issues. Re both of those, he reiterated that we must make sure BLM is committed to both issues and Jodie agreed that's true. Insurance for the lens isn't an issue because of BLM is a government entity and is self-insured, but the enclosure has to have permits. Zale would like to see Bruce Elster and Dan Murphy evaluate the structural integrity of enclosure. Zale is concerned of safety with the glass and potential issues. For now Jodie is focusing solely on the lens agreement with the CG now and then permits will be her focus. David asked if it's premature to tackle permitting before we have possession of the lens. John H. said we have to find out who owns the enclosure before we get an assessment and repair it. It's more complex than it sounds. Zale believes that a professional opinion would benefit BLM and us. He's concerned that if the county saw the enclosure they could condemn it. David suggested Zale bring back a proposal with cost estimates to assess the enclosure. Re lease: Jodie met with Art Chapman and got the plans of enclosure and he shared current lease between SLO county and the Lions for the land it sits on.

New Business:

None

Discussion Items:

None

End: 7:10 pm

Minutes recorded by Holly Gant.

Appendix 1: Treasurer's Report 6/24/2020 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for May 2020

1. OPERATIONS INCOME: Last Month: \$647.00* YTD: \$15,066.15
PROFIT: Last Month: <\$6.73> YTD: \$62.04**

*Light station closed for May

**Excludes restoration expense: \$45,424

TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE: \$12,662.03

BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE: Last Month: none YTD: \$672.07

BALANCES: PP Bank: \$4,741.18 ASAP: \$35,934.12

2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Beg Bal</i>	<i>Market Chg</i>	<i>Div/Int</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>W/D</i>	<i>Ending Bal</i>
May 2020	516,611.92	12,035.08	933.78	--	--	529,580.78
Apr 2020	526,640.37	28,999.78	971.77	--	40,000.00	516,611.92
Mar 2020	568,597.10	<42,869.90>	913.17	--	--	526,640.37

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed May transactions – no changes.
- Received BLM audit report – response being prepared.
- Initiated review of FSB lighting installation status.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Appendix 2: Gift Shop Report 6/24/2020 – Holly Gant

NET SALES

*Shaded month indicates lower sales than that same month last year

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
2011	884	1,009	1,354	2,517	1,435	2,216
2012	862	922	1,497	1,812	1,366	2,121
2013	1,848	1,270	1,931	2,849	2,208	3,407
2014	1,853	3,263	3,072	2,447	2,186	2,697
2015	2,873	2,278	2,512	2,604	2,783	3,628
2016	1,798	2,609	2,830	1,988	2,142	2,586
2017	2,196	1,461	2,678	3,909	2,864	3,350
2018	3,077	3,094	3,104	3,316	3,133	3,707
2019	1,015	1,605	2,565	3,350	3,641	4,665
2020	2,202	2,764	1,653	150	58	

*Government shutdown effected Dec 2018 and Jan 2019

*COVID-19 effected 2020 beginning on March 19, 2020

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011	3,481	2,973	1,733	1,445	1,158	1,837
2012	3,718	3,725	1,951	2,653	1,207	1,344
2013	4,351	4,121	2,314	2,048	1,872	1,965
2014	3,838	4,283	3,045	2,528	1,412	1,635
2015	4,862	4,356	2,609	3,216	2,258	2,157
2016	4,861	3,410	2,716	2,647	1,930	2,103
2017	4,666	3,701	2,218	3,022	2,793	3,491
2018	6,225	4,157	3,383	2,552	1,597	1,730
2019	6,804	4,722	2,070	3,656	2,717	3,719
2020						

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2011	\$ 9,415	\$ 22,042
2012	\$ 8,580	\$ 23,178
2013	\$13,513	\$ 30,184
2014	\$15,518	\$ 32,259
2015	\$16,678	\$ 36,136
2016	\$13,953	\$ 31,620
2017	\$16,458	\$36,349
2018	\$19,431	\$39,075
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020		

Appendix 3: BLM Report 6/24/2020 – Jodie Nelson

On site at the light station:

Mike Holley and Christine Buckley are now officially at the light station as contractors, helping with maintenance projects.

They will be working with Veronika to replace the walkways in front of Units C and D with concrete paths, and later painting the CG units, as well as keeping up with trail maintenance and weeding.

Our new BLM maintenance person, Nathaniel Simmons, will be coming out soon to get a maintenance inventory going and help with some of the more technical projects.

Behind the scenes:

Lens Agreement - 3 parts: narrative (completed), facility report (ongoing information collection still to complete), photographs of current exhibit site (collected)

ACE and PBLSA agreements - met with Megan Bryant today for clarification on steps to modify the agreements

New temporary light station manager, Jesse Pluim, will be starting in July. Jesse currently works as the public affairs specialist at the state office.

Great American Outdoors Act may provide us with additional funding to tackle construction projects.

Tour Numbers

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
October	637	605	516	500	506	441	535
November	622	503	474	357	523	433	334
December	404	464	426	273	829	251	518
January	661	731	623	266	608	0	715
February	573	570	572	284	780	318	578
March	696	754	560	502	662	784	185
April	663	616	581	666	684	790	0
May	432	629	352	572	362	555	0
June	658	916	521	787	732	698	0
July	1178	990	850	1125	1169	1085	
August	985	809	693	836	1001	819	
September	601	481	442	437	591	374	
Total	8110	8068	6610	6605	8447	6548	

*partial

Appendix 4: Tower Report 6/24/2020 – Jim Harris

Bruce Elster assessment is that the project is about at the same status as reported in the last summary report due to the fact that he has been working on another project that required his commitment. He continues to model the existing tower and the replica replacement top with the new computer hardware and software. Bruce and Dan Murphy did correspond via phone to discuss the status of the design and the plans to determine the estimated rough cost for the construction of the design; hopefully, they will be able meet in person before the July PBLSA meeting.

Appendix 5: Underground Utilities Report 6/24/2020 – Jim Harris

The status is the same as in the previous three months due to the public health conditions. The undergrounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold. Maxwell Muscarella and Sean Cassidy of Connected Energy along with Brian French still plan to present their work on the design of a sustainable option to the PBLSA Board when it returns to a face-to-face meeting; the option is to allow electric power for the light station to be provided with or without grid input using a microgrid system with solar and motor generator input and battery storage.

Appendix 6: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 6/24/2020 – Jim Harris/Holly Gant/David Cooper

The status remains the same as presented at the May meeting; that summary is presented as a reference of further discussion at this meeting. The plan to initiate the capital campaign continues to be obtaining a set of three proposed consultants who will be reviewed by the committee and then presented to the PBLSA Board for their decision. Unfortunately the public health crisis has put this planning on hold. It also is recognized that the current financial challenges due to the covid-19 health crisis does not make a good environment to initiate a capital campaign; hence the delay is probably for the best in the long run. Therefore, the following is given as a suggestion for a discussion by the board for the plans for the next two years:

1. The primary focus of the SLO community for the next year or so will be the covid-19 pandemic and its economic consequences.
2. In 2021 the care of the first order Fresnel lens on loan to the Lions Club of Cambria will be transferred to the Piedras Blancas Light Station under the responsibility of the BLM.
3. The Lens requires a museum quality environment and setting for public display.
4. Perhaps the best option to provide support for the Lens is the restored Victorian triplex (estimated cost is at least \$1.55M).
5. The alternative is to store the Lens until the requirements for its new display environment are realized.
6. Focused grants and donations will be solicited to support the return of the Lens and the restoration of the Victorian triplex.
7. In lieu of a capital campaign in the next two years, activity to support the return of the Lens to Piedras Blancas will be used to educate the community about the plans for the restoration of Light station.
8. There will not be a major seismic event and the construction of the restored tower will remain on hold (design and engineering will continue).

Appendix 7: Fresnel Lens Report 6/24/2020 – Zale Schuster

BLM/USCG Transfer of Responsibility of Historic PBLS First Order Fresnel Lens
Meeting Minutes
Telephone Conference Call—June 9, 2020

In attendance: David Cooper (PBLSA), Ryan Cooper (BLM), Arlyn Danielson (USCG), John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Janet Pasiuk (USCG), Zale Schuster (PBLSA).

Ryan Cooper called the meeting to order at 11:04 AM (PST). He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and arrive at consensus on steps moving forward to transfer responsibility of the historic PBLS First Order Fresnel Lens, currently under USCG lease to the Cambria Lions Club, to the BLM.

Arlyn Danielson stated that the current lease with the Cambria Lions Club expires on March 13, 2021. The Lions Club is not interested in renewing its lease agreement. In assigning a new owner/leasee, the USCG is committed to selecting a responsible steward of this national treasure (estimated appraisal value of \$1 million) who has the financial resources and human capital to insure proper long-term preservation, day-to-day caretaking, promotion of the lens for maximum public benefit and display, and structural stabilization/protection of such an important heritage asset.

Ryan reviewed the resources that the BLM brings to meet such goals. They include two permanent full-time BLM staff members assigned to the light station, a strong partnership with the nonprofit Piedras Blancas Light Station Association, and 25-30 active and engaged community volunteers. He also noted strong community-wide support for the lens. John Hodge said that the prestigious status of the PBLS as a unit of the California Coastal National Monument puts the highest levels of protection in place in the BLM's federal system of National Conservation Lands. This is a standard of protection equal to that of national parks. It was the general consensus of all parties that BLM custodianship serves the best interest of the lens. Arlyn and Janet Pasiuk, on behalf of the USCG, affirmed their willingness to pursue transfer of custodianship to BLM and further investigate all options for transfer to BLM.

Considerable discussion then turned to short-term and long-term plans for the lens, including current and future site locations. It was generally agreed that a new five-year lease to BLM maintaining the lens' location in Cambria would be an acceptable short-term arrangement. Since the current 28 year-old lens enclosure in Cambria is in rough and degraded condition, upgrades would need to be undertaken by the new leaseholder. In addition to renovating the enclosure to acceptable structural condition, Arlyn mentioned the need to provide UV protection, environmental controls, and the addition of curtains or shutters to protect the lens from sunlight exposure. In addition, interpretive display materials, noted Janet, have to be updated and expanded. The lens currently sits on San Luis Obispo County property. The BLM will need to investigate and execute a new property lease with the county.

It was the general consensus of the attendees that a long-term plan must focus on repatriating the lens to the more suitable heritage site on Point Piedras Blancas, 16 miles north of Cambria, on the campus of the historic 1875 Piedras Blancas Light Station. Ryan mentioned two possibilities under discussion. A museum-grade exhibition space could be incorporated into a future reconstruction of the original Victorian duplex keepers' cottage. Another option is to build a ground-level replica of the original lens housing. While the short-term option would name BLM as a new leasee, the long-term plan involves transfer of permanent ownership of the lens

asset and title from the USCG to the BLM. Arlyn said she and Janet will further investigate details of the lease versus property ownership transfer.

Janet and Arlyn spelled out next steps. They will send Ryan and Jodie Nelson a letter detailing the conditions of a new five-year custodial lease and a loan request application. Jodie will affirm the BLM's interest, commitment, and qualifications as a new leaseholder, fill out the application, and return to Arlyn and Janet who will then oversee execution of a new lease. A new lease could be signed before the end of 2020.

Ryan Cooper thanked all parties for their common efforts to preserve the lens. He closed the meeting at 11:56 AM (PST).

—Compiled by David Cooper / Checked by Jodie Nelson