

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

August 23, 2023

Present: Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Gary O'Neill, John Hodge (BLM), Tammy Faust (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, John Brass

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the July 26, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – Income improved this month, showing a small increase in profit and leaving only a small loss for the year to date. The investment portfolio has grown due to invested donations and positive market changes this month.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Gift shop income was lower this July than the same month last year. A review of sales for both years shows that clothing and stuffed animal sales are lower this year, but clothing remains the highest-selling category overall.
4. BLM Update (Tammy Faust) – BLM's approval of tasks #1-4 from the MOA has proceeded through a final revision and NEPA approval and should be ready for signatures tomorrow. Once signed, the PBLSA will be notified and can communicate with Shoreline, Wellsona, and Yeh to coordinate the start of the tasks. Jim was asked to describe task #5, which is seismic testing around the foundation that will give assurance the models for stabilizing the tower are accurate. There is no impact on the approvals granted by BLM for tasks #1-4. Temporary manager Tammy Faust's last day at the light station will be on Thursday; Ryan Cooper returns next week. Tammy has been working on maintaining and updating the safety systems at the light station, including fire suppression. The Motus project installed an antenna on the roof of Unit B to track tagged wildlife remotely.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See BLM report above. Jim will communicate with Shoreline, Wellsona, and Yeh so they are aware that work can start soon. The deadlines in the MOA may need adjustment if the work can't be completed by the end of the year. Judd King of Yeh will have a proposal on task #5 for seismic testing before the September board meeting.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No update.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – No update.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No update.

9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – Amber Long has received the plans she needs to send to potential RFP architectural firms.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – Nearly all the funds necessary to repair the lens enclosure have been secured. In an email before the board meeting, David suggested that the board consider supplying any additional funds needed if the estimated costs have increased. The check for \$25,000 from the PBLSA has been sent to the Pinedorado Lions Foundation. Scot will talk to Shoreline and Wellsona regarding the work schedule and find out if there are changes to the cost estimate. Work may be able to start in the next few weeks.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – Engagement with the Facebook and Instagram pages is mostly increasing. The deadline for ticket sales for the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7 has not been determined but will probably be a week before the event, depending on the food vendor.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items: None.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) on September 21, 2023.

Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 8/23/23 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

July 26, 2023

Present: Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Gary O'Neill, John Hodge (BLM), Tammy Faust (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), Scot Addis

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the June 28, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – There have been small losses for the month and year. Another anonymous \$50,000 donation was received for the Victorian house reconstructions.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Net sales in June were lower than the previous June, though comparable to June 2021. Sales of fleece jackets and vests, two of the gift shop's highest-costs items were especially high in June 2022, which may explain the difference.
4. BLM Update (Tammy Faust) – Tammy reported that the NEPA for MOA components #1-3 has begun and will go to the resource specialists to review soon. Tammy has also been doing maintenance on the Coast Guard buildings and addressing concerns around the light station from the safety inspection. The Hike In Open House events on July 5 and 19 had 79 and 129 attendees respectively. Donations and gift shop sales did well, especially on the 19th. The final two Hike In events for the summer will be August 2 and 16, both of which are anticipated to have good attendance.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – Jim said that Bruce is ready to begin work as soon as components #1-3 are approved by BLM and SHPO. John Hodge reported that approval has been granted by SHPO for components #1-4, and BLM is working on the NEPA. A timeline is not available, but the review by BLM resource specialists may take 30 days. At the August board meeting, Jim will have an additional task related to the seismic testing that was recommended by Bruce.

There was discussion on funding for the tower work in addition to PBLSA's resources. Harry asked John if a new co-op agreement would be possible. John said Ryan has been talking to the grants office. Applying for the Great America Outdoors Act funding with a request scaled down from the previous \$12 million estimate may be a good possibility.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – No report.

8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – The workgroup will meet via Zoom on August 2 to discuss the RFP Amber has prepared to send to potential architectural firms for the conversion of the historical plans to modern building standards. John will try to get BLM staff on the call as well.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – Significant progress has been made toward getting donations for the enclosure repair. Scot will ask Harry for the PBLSA's previously approved \$25,000 contribution when other donations are secured. Board members praised Scot's efforts in securing these donations.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – There was a brief discussion of some of the logistics of planning the Dinner & Libations for the Station event on October 7.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items: None.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on August 22, 2023.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 7/26/23 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for July 2023

1. OPERATIONS INCOME: Last Month: \$11,150.11 YTD: \$46,460.51
PROFIT: Last Month: \$2,296.36* YTD: <\$1,082.10>**

MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS: \$18,500.05
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE: \$13,660.03
CONSTRUCTION FUND: \$105,727.28
VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND: \$201,000.00

BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE: Last Month: none YTD: none
BALANCES: P.P. Bank: \$500.00 ASAP: none

* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$691.36

**Excludes restoration/BLM: \$22,653.43

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>
July 2023	776,079.65	8,996.22	1,950.11	50,000	--	837,025.98
June 2023	758,766.54	15,816.59	1,496.52	--	--	776,079.65
May 2023	720,019.34	<12,693.46>	1,440.66	50,000	--	758,766.54

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for June/July.
- Transferred \$50,000 donation to Fidelity.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 8/23/23 – Cressant Swarts

A review of items sold last July versus this July shows that overall, we are selling less clothing and fewer stuffed animals than last summer. This may represent a general economic trend, but Cressant will review the clothing and toys and try some additional signage.

Dinner & Libations for the Station tickets grossed \$811 in July, which is not included in the revenue, profit, and net sales calculations below.

The gift shop took in \$309 at the July 5 Hike In Open House and \$771 at the second event on July 19. Donations for July 5 totaled \$251 and for July 19 totaled \$389.

July Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$8,416.11
Website sales	\$83.00
Total	\$8,499.11

July Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$5,495.76
Profit	\$3,814.35
Percentage	41%

**Includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, fees, and shipping*

NET SALES COMPARISONS

Shaded month indicates lower sales than last year. Includes website sales starting 2021. Excludes donations, memberships, and engraved bricks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	1,015	1,605	2,565	3,350	3,641	4,665	6,804	4,722	2,070	3,656	2,717	3,719
2020	2,202	2,764	1,653	215	164	189	524	244	136	56	220	376
2021	108	1,291	2,198	3,723	4,276	5,363	8,469	7,588	4,238	5,383	3,474	2,265
2022	2,636	3,290	4,410	4,404	6,384	7,593	9,236	7,493	5,204	5,329	3,693	3,824
2023	1,705	3,836	3,274	4,605	6,493	5,760	7,875					

Government shutdown Dec 2018. COVID-19 closure Mar 2020 - Feb 2021. Weather/road closures Jan – March 2023.

Yearly Net Sales Comparisons

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020	\$7,187	\$8,743
2021	\$16,959	\$48,376
2022	\$28,717	\$63,496
2023	\$25,673	

Appendix 4: BLM Update 8/23/23 – Tammy Faust

Accomplishments:

- CX draft for GEO Tech having final revisions.
- Smoke/carbon detectors installed in all Unit living and sleeping quarters of Coast Guard Houses
- Estimates received for Gas Line replacement (\$7,000) and Fire Suppression System (replace = \$40,000-50,000 / rebuild \$3,500)
- Fire hoses have been cleaned, dried, and rolled by Cal Fire. Plexiglass boxes are being made to fit within the wooden Fire boxes for weather proofing. Several of the ruined wooden Fire boxes are being rebuilt.
- Safety railing on telecom building has been installed.
- Termite inspection completed with Pump house needing treatment. Steps of telecom bldg have boreholes that will also be treated.
- Hike-In's: last one on Aug. 16 had 113 in attendance.
- Average number of tours has been 40 people per day.
- Keepers' Cottage scans provided to PBLSA board.

Upcoming Events:

- 9/15 - 4th Grade Outreach Program - First School Field Trip of the year - Cayucos Elementary
- 9/15 - Astronomy Program with Park Ranger Bre Brown
- 9/22 - Volunteer Summit- Appreciation and Recruitment Pancake Breakfast
- 9/23 - National Public Lands Day - Jodie working on getting approval for fee free day for tours
- 9/29 (tentative date) - USGS presentation about new MOTUS station at Piedras Blancas

- 10/20 - 4th Grade Outreach - Cambria Elementary School Field Trip
- 10/21 (details tbd) - USGS Bat presentation
- 10/24 - Regular tours cancelled. Home School Group Field Trip
- 10/27 - 4th Grade Outreach - Monarch Grove Field Trip
- 10/28 - "Ghosts of the Lighthouse" Full Moon Tour with Park Ranger Bre Brown

- 11/10 - Volunteer Appreciation Event - Tour of Pt. San Luis Light Station
- 11/11 - Photography Tour (additional photography tours/workshops still being discussed)
- 11/17 - Astronomy Program with Park Ranger Bre Brown

- 12/1 - Full Moon Hike with Park Ranger Bre Brown
- First week of December - possible dawn photography tour

Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 8/23/23 – Jim Harris

Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering has been in discussion with Judd King of Yeh and Associates, Inc. about an additional task in preparation for the rehabilitation of the Tower. The task is for seismic testing of the tower site with an external force mechanism; this would provide site data on the foundation seismic physics directly as opposed to the currently used external data. This project will be submitted by Yeh and Associates, Inc as a Component #5 to be appended to the existing MOA between the BLM and the PBLSA. The tentative schedule for the submittal has been postponed to the September PBLSA Board meeting due to scheduling conflicts with summer vacation plans for Judd King.

As stated before, with the Shoreline final report of October 14, 2021, and the four task proposals for Components #1, #2, #3, and #4, there will be sufficient documented engineering work to begin the construction rehabilitation phase for restoring the tower. The submittal of the on-site seismic testing to be proposed for Component #5 will address any risks involved in the modeling studies for the stabilization of the tower by the use of inferred seismic data for simulation. The schedule presented in the MOA which supports the end of the year 2023 for the completion of this phase of the tower stabilization and rehabilitation engineering work should be considered at risk since there still has not been an approval by the BLM for any of the four submitted task proposals.

Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 8/23/23 – Jim Harris

The status of this project remains the same as last month: the undergrounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold until the BLM and California State Parks come to a formal understanding of the access road to the light station, along with other considerations. As stated previously, the PBLSA provided an \$8K deposit with PG&E a number of years ago as a condition for their cost proposal for the estimated work. Connected Energy has prepared a revised version of their white paper and is willing to give a presentation to the Board as soon as the Board is meeting in person again, hopefully in the next few months. Their white paper is a proposed design of a sustainable option 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 7: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 8/23/23 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe/Cressant Swarts

The status remains the same as last month: the PBLSA Board is awaiting the progress of the work outlined in the MOA before initiating any plans for a capital campaign.

Appendix 8: Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report 8/23/23 – David Cooper

The Cottages Workgroup met on 8/2/23. We discussed the Scope of Work section of the RFP drafted by Amber Long regarding the interior uses and layout of the buildings. We decided it was premature to determine the exact uses of each cottage. So we agreed to request two general options from contractors/bidders:

Option 1: Plans should include building exteriors, basic structural design, and no interior drawings.

Option 2: Plans should include building exteriors, basic structural design, and simple interior drawings following the historic plans.

The Workgroup also inventoried the original 1904 drawings and elevations. We supplied Amber with seven scans of the Duplex and four scans of the head keeper's cottage in sufficient resolution for distribution. Amber will now circulate the RFP and scans to three contractors/bidders. Proposals are due two weeks after the RFP is received.

Appendix 9: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 8/23/23 – Scot Addis

The cost of the lens enclosure repair project as originally bid is \$113K. Scot will contact Dan from Wellsona for an update on the original cost estimate to determine where the funding needs to be to start the project. Between the County and our Board we have \$75K secured. The verbal commitments add \$20K. Should we receive a grant from the Cambria Community Council for the full \$25K requested we would have aggregate funds of \$120K. Otherwise our funding level is at \$95K leaving us about \$18K short if Dan's cost has not risen dramatically. Scot will know more after the CCC grant committee evaluates the requests received. They meet on August 23 and expect to advise recipients by September 1.

Appendix 10: Communications/Social Media Report 8/23/23 – Cressant Swarts

Overall reach (the number of views that posts received) increased considerably for Facebook and declined slightly for Instagram. Page likes and follows, as well as visits, increased for both Facebook and Instagram.

Marketing for the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7 has appeared on *The Cambriaca* local news site, Visit San Simeon website, and Hwy 1 Road Trip website. Information has also been sent to the KTEA local radio station and other news sources. Flyers have been distributed in Cambria, San Simeon, Cayucos, and Morro Bay. The early-bird price of \$90 ended on August 15; tickets are now \$100 and are available at <https://pedrasblancas.org/dinner-and-libations-for-the-station.html>.

Cressant is also helping BLM staff with marketing for upcoming fall events, including two photo workshops like last year's Golden Hour Photo Tour; the proceeds of the photo events go to PBLSA. All events will be listed on <https://www.piedrasblancas.org/events> and our Facebook event page.

(Direct link to the events page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation/events/?id=100064822293325&sk=events>)

The next *Beacon* newsletter should be mailed next week.

<https://www.piedrasblancas.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation>

<https://www.instagram.com/piedrasblancaslightstation>