

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

December 6, 2023

Present: Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, John Brass, Gary O'Neill, Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Ryan Cooper (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM)

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 October 25, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – October was a good month financially due to the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7, leading to what Harry believes was the largest monthly profit for the year. The new insurance policy for the gift shop inventory is more expensive than previously, however, which will cut into profits for the year. There was discussion on the insurance policies held by the PBLSA and alternate possibilities. Harry will look for more cost-effective alternatives after the new year. Investment performance has been down recently.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – The recent ACE crew working at the light station painted the outside of the gift shop.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – Ryan will be attending a training in early January to learn about changes in grants and agreements that might be possible between BLM and PBLSA. Ryan reported that the problems with the gate operator mechanism and damage to the gate itself will be addressed in the next month or two. Ryan and Gary have discussed working with local tribes to move forward on the boundary fence project. Work on the tower is waiting on scheduling and the completion of the lens enclosure repairs. There have been several evening events in the last two months with more coming in the future. The volunteer holiday party is scheduled for the end of January. The ACE (American Conservation Experience) crew is staying at the light station for two one-week stays and will be working on the trail and the Coast Guard units in addition to painting the gift shop and the tank house.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – Work on Components #1-3 is waiting on scheduling. Bruce and Dan would like to add another structural engineer to Component #4, which is the engineering evaluation and preliminary concept plan for replacing the top three floors of the lighthouse. The role and cost impact of the proposed additional engineer should be available by the January board meeting.

There was discussion of the letter David wrote emphasizing the importance of formal agreements between PBLSA and BLM for future projects. Jim proposed the following motion in support of David's letter: "The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association endorses the letter

written by the PBLSA Chair David Cooper to Jocelyn Torres of the Conservation Land Foundation via email around December 5, 2023, regarding the BLM 15-Year Strategic Plan for the National Conservation Lands for the next 15 years (2025-2040) and encourages the support of the brief comments that it contains.” Gary seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – Jodie and Cressant submitted a grant to the National Park Trust’s Every Kid Outdoors Small Grants Program, asking for \$3,000 to pay for the transportation costs for the spring fourth-grade field trips. The results will be announced on December 22. Harry suggested that discussion of a capital campaign should be added as new business to the January agenda.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The UV film on the lens enclosure has been completed, and work is now proceeding on removing the rusted portion of the footings around the base. The final work will be painting the enclosure and possibly some repairs to the roof. Scot will contact *The Cambriaca* regarding a fundraising appeal to supplement the remaining cost of the lens enclosure repair, estimated at \$33k. Harry suggested a small event in January or February to celebrate the completion of the repair project.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – The most popular posts on social media recently were in connection with the events hosted at the light station this fall. Harry commented that social media will be important in a capital campaign.

Old Business:

New Business:

Discussion Items:

Ryan commented that the 150th anniversary of the light station is coming up; a decision will need to be made on whether to celebrate when construction started or when the lighthouse was lit. He asked for suggestions on how to celebrate.

Ryan suggested that the board meet in person at the light station once a quarter in order to maintain a connection and see what has been happening recently.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on January 21, 2024.

Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 12/6/23 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

October 25, 2023

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

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), Scot Addis, John Hodge (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the September 27, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – There was a good profit for the year in September due to ticket sales from the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraising event. Investments were down.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Net sales and profits were down from the previous year and last month; Cressant will review gift shop items to see if prices need to be increased.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – The restroom for the parking lot is one of Ryan's top priorities this fiscal year. He is working on scheduling a meeting to coordinate work on the tower. There have been a lot of events this fall and more coming up in November and December; see the list in Appendix 4. The next school tour is scheduled for February. Tour numbers have been higher than last year at this time; tours have usually been full.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – The meeting to coordinate scheduling for the work on the tower is waiting until David is available. After this meeting, there will be a better idea of how long the work in Components #1-3 will take.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – No changes.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report. The workgroup is waiting for research on the head keeper's cottage to be completed before moving forward with an RFP.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The UV sheeting over the glass on the lens enclosure has been completed, and structural repair has begun. Scot asked in his report for ideas for funding

sources for the final \$18k required to complete the lens enclosure repair. There was discussion on using a GoFundMe campaign, as well as publicizing the need in local news and asking for public donations.

11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – The estimated total profit for the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7 was \$8,900, compared to \$7,600 from last year's event.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items:

1. Date of November/December meeting – The next board meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 6 at 6 p.m.
2. John Brass asked if there was any information about installing a new boundary fence. Gary investigated another option but found that it wouldn't work. Ryan talked about the possibility of working with a tribal work crew to install the fence, which would remove obstacles related to possible archaeological discoveries.

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

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on November 28, 2023.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 12/6/23 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for October 2023

1. OPERATIONS INCOME: Last Month: \$12,786.84* YTD: \$82,517.96**
PROFIT: Last Month: \$3,795.82 # YTD: \$7,905.26 ##
MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS: \$27,622.48
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE: \$13,660.03
CONSTRUCTION FUND: \$102,951.56
VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND: \$203,722.86
BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE: Last Month: none YTD: none
BALANCES: P.P. Bank: \$500.00 ASAP: none

* Special event (D&L): \$4,608.89

** Special event (D&L): \$11,980.24

Excludes restoration/BLM: \$538

Excludes restoration/BLM: \$51,246.93

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>
Oct 2023	795,893.73	<10,013.14>	3,299.78	--	--	788,190.37
Sept 2023	809,004.32	<18,278.01>	5,167.42	--	--	795,893.73
Aug 2023	837,025.98	2,338.81	1,682.83	--	25,000	809,004.32

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for September/October.
- Finalized tax returns with CPA.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Appendix 3: Gift Shop Report 12/6/23 – Cressant Swarts

For September, tax for Dinner & Libations was accidentally removed twice; correcting this changed the profit from \$1,208.47 and 29% to \$1,449.15 and 34%, which is more in line with the overall trend.

Special events (Golden Hour Photo Workshop, Dinner & Libations tickets and silent auction) grossed \$4,924.68 in October, which is not included in the revenue, profit, and net sales calculations below.

The on-site sales for the gift shop includes \$904 from the evening of Dinner & Libations.

October Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$7,164.25
Website sales	\$8.00
Total	\$7,172.95

October Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$4,427.88
Profit	\$2,745.07
Percentage	38%

**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, engraved bricks, and event sales.

	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	8,017	3,880	6,380		

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 12/6/2023 – Ryan Cooper

Assistance Agreement

I am attending a training in January to learn all the new ins and outs for grants and agreements in the federal gov. I hopefully will also get some time to talk with our State Office person in charge of agreements so we can get back on track with this.

Entrance Gate

If you have been out to the Lighthouse in the past few months, you have noticed that our gate has seem better days. I have a welder coming out to look at it this week to see if he can fabricate us a better gate. I have also ordered a new operator that should be more rodent resistant.

Boundary Fencing

I wanted to get the feel from the board whether we would like to push this project forward.

Restrooms

Not much movement this month but still moving forward.

Tower

We are trying to get everyone together so we can put together a plan of attack.

Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

Victorian Duplex

No changes this month

Events Last Month

October 27	Wildlife Society Workshop
October 28	Evening tour at LH
November 4	Photo Tour
Nov 10	Vol tour at Point SLO
Nov 17	Starry Night at the Light Station
Dec 1	Night Hike Program

Future Events

Dec 9	Early Morning Photo Tour
Jan 11 – 15	Morro Bay Bird Festival
Jan 26	Volunteer New Year Festival

Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
October	506	441	535	22	552	421	599	
November	523	433	334	56	350	439	378	
December	829	251	518	0	208	411	43*	
January	608	0	715	0	300	196		
February	780	318	578	108	407	341		
March	662	784	185	160	471	329		
April	684	790	0	399	524	570		
May	362	555	0	446	452	444		
June	732	698	0	643	661	752		
July	1169	1085	0	972	881	1087		
August	1001	819	0	834	1043	1192		
September	591	374	0	547	487	493		
Total	8447	6548	2865	4166	6336	6675		

*partial

Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 12/6/23 – Jim Harris

The scheduling meeting organized by David Cooper with Ryan Cooper, Jim Harris, and others for initiating the four MOA tasks for the tower has yet to be held. Presented below is the summary status of the Components #1, #2, and #3. The status of Component #4 will not be ready until the January 2024 PBLSA meeting. Bruce Elster and Dan Murphy are preparing a document defining the Component #4 schedule and adding a new structural engineer to work with them on the completion of the project; they are currently obligated to the Lens Project as a priority. 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 schedule presented in the MOA, which supported the end of the year 2023 for the completion of the tower stabilization and rehabilitation engineering work, should be revised accordingly. It is expected that the scheduling of the first three components will commence independent of the start of Component #4.

Summary of Piedras Blancas Light House Tower Schedule/Cost Worksheet

Component 1. External brick & mortar testing in support of light house retrofit project.

Cost: \$20,000. **Schedule:** “Field time onsite for this task is anticipated to be three (3) days. Evaluation and reporting of test results is expected to take approximately two (2) weeks.”

Component 2. YEH & Associates – geotechnical services for the light house retrofit project.

Cost: \$54,198. **Schedule:** “Scheduling fieldwork for both the geophysical services and test pits is anticipated to require about 2 weeks. The draft *Geotechnical Report* can be submitted approximately 8 weeks after completion of the field work. The final report can be submitted within 2 weeks after having received comments. Our schedule of services can be adjusted as the project progresses to reflect critical path milestones.”

Component 3. Exploratory restoration of the southern lower window opening on the light house.

Cost: \$120,000. **Schedule:** “The anticipated time frame to complete rehabilitation and restoration of the window is expected to be four (4) months.”

Component 4. Phase 1. Design level engineering evaluation with the creation of preliminary concept plans for the replacement of the light house top.

Cost: \$40,000. **Schedule:** TBD by January 2024 PBLSA Board Meeting with memo defining addition of Structural Engineer for completion of MOA tasks.

References from MOA:

- A. “Preliminary Retrofit Evaluation Lighthouse Tower” (October 14, 2021) - Shoreline Engineering, Inc. [Components 1, 2, and 3]
- B. “Light Tower Material & Window Test/Rehabilitation” (January 19, 2022)- Shoreline Engineering, Inc. [Components 1, 2, and 3]
- C. Notes from on-site meeting with BLM, PBLSA, Shoreline, Wellsona (February 18, 2022) - PBLSA [Components 1, 2, and 3]
- D. “Proposal for Geotechnical Services, Piedras Blancas Light Station Seismic Retrofit” (September 25, 2023; revised version of August 10, 2022, MOA proposal) - Yeh and Associates, Inc. [Component 2]

- E. Draft Proposal for “Light Tower Engineering Evaluation for Replacement of Watchroom, Parapet, and Lantern” (June 21, 2022) - Shoreline Engineering, Inc. and Wellsona Iron, Inc. [Component 4]

Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 12/6/23 – 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 12/6/23 – 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: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 12/6/23 – Scot Addis

The next phase of the lens enclosure repair project has begun. Dan Murphy of Wellsona Iron is on-site (ably assisted by none other than our very own David Cooper!) and started the structural repair work. Barriers have been erected inside the enclosure to protect the lens. Sections of the rusted footings are being removed in preparation for replacement. Once the structural work is done, the final element of the project is painting the metal framework. Members of the San Luis Obispo County staff and U. S. Coast Guard will receive updates as the project progresses. Suggestions are welcome regarding sources of additional funding to complete the project.

Appendix 9: Communications/Social Media Report 12/6/23 – Cressant Swarts

Overall reach (the number of views that posts received) increased for both Facebook and Instagram, though the rate of increase was lower than last month. Similarly, the number of new followers for Facebook and Instagram declined from the previous month, but that still results in an overall larger number of followers than October. Facebook page likes: 1,453, Facebook followers: 1,639, Instagram followers: 1,951. Most popular posts were those promoting the Ghosts of the Light Station event and the upcoming. Break of Dawn Photo Workshop.

We are making a greater effort to put all events at the light station that are sponsored by BLM or PBLSA on the website at <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>)

<https://www.piedrasblancas.org>

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

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