

## **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

December 7, 2022

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

**Absent:** Jodie Nelson (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

David thanked all for coming to the meeting and wished everyone happy holidays. Ryan introduced Bre Brown, the new BLM park ranger, who started at the light station in early November. David welcomed Bre and invited her to attend any of the board meetings.

David also announced that Cressant received additional hours and responsibilities, beginning in mid-November. Her new duties include supporting the board's grant research and writing efforts, updating the design of the website and *The Beacon*, and increasing the light station's social media presence. There will be a new standing monthly report to describe the social media and other communications efforts.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the October 26, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. The operating income and profit for both the month and the year to date have increased over previous months. The anonymous donations have been excluded from the operating income for clarity. The financial committee, consisting of David, John, and Harry, approved moving the anonymous donations totaling approximately \$101k to a one-year Fidelity Investments CD at 4.5-4.7%, rather than risking the recent volatility of mutual funds. The board had no objections.

The Association's investments have seen a good recovery from previous months, and the November balance is over \$630k. David asked where the first anonymous donation of approximately \$99k had been deposited; Harry said it was deposited in Fidelity mutual funds with other investments, where it has also shown some loss.

There was a brief discussion about reporting the investments of the anonymous donations separately on the treasurer's report for it to be public record. Harry proposed that proceeds from the October 1 Dinner & Libations event be moved to the Tower Restoration Fund as for previous events. Jim asked if the donations form on the website could be designated for the Tower Restoration Fund; Harry and Cressant will discuss how to capture the information correctly.

3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. The trend of this year's gift shop sales exceeding previous years has continued through October and November.

Tickets for the Golden Hour Photo Tour event held on November 5 were sold through the gift shop website using Square. In the past, events like this have used a third-party ticket service. It is anticipated that this method can be used for larger events, such as the next Dinner & Libations, increasing the overall profit. The Golden Hour event didn't sell out, but there was a good turnout of locals, as well as visitors from all over the state. Some visitors came for the morning tour then bought tickets to return for the evening tour. The event was promoted through social media, as well as through Gary's camera society connections and invitations to media members by Jodie.

4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Ryan reported that the renewal of the co-op agreement between PBLSA and BLM will be handled differently than in the past. When application categories are announced in January or February, BLM will initiate a request, to which PBLSA can create a project proposal in response. The co-op agreement can be for as long as five years.

Bids for the parking lot project were lower than anticipated, so the contract is being re-worked to chip-seal all paved areas, not just the parking lot. The electrician is working in the fog signal building this week and has a couple more days of work. Ryan would like to start planning a grand opening for the fog signal building. The holiday party is being postponed due to weather, so perhaps a volunteer appreciation component can be worked into the grand opening. The light station's birthday on February 15 is a possible date. David encouraged everyone to attend and to use this event as an opportunity to draw attention to the work the PBLSA has been doing, and as a chance to recognize the Hind Foundation, which gave a grant for the fog signal building restoration.

Ryan has heard from the BLM engineers regarding the tower restoration proposals and is now working with the archaeologist. David, Jim, and Ryan met to discuss the project; David and Jim have started developing a Memorandum of Agreement that will define the role of the PBLSA in the early stages of the tower restoration. Ryan thanked the board for their initiative in sending the letter to BLM. Further discussion below in the Tower Report.

Monarch Grove school tours are ongoing. Larger schools are being broken up into multiple tours. The holiday party scheduled for December 10 has been postponed due to the weather forecast. Tours have been well-attended, even on rainy days.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. The board received a letter from Gabe Garcia, BLM Field Manager for the Bakersfield office, in response to the letter the board sent requesting a timeline for the tower restoration. The Memorandum of Agreement drafted by David and Jim will outline the responsibilities the PBLSA and the BLM will undertake regarding the structural engineering work preliminary to the restoration of the tower. The PBLSA will fund the engineering design work for the external brick and mortar testing, the geotechnical study, the restoration of the southern lower window opening, and the creation of a concept plan for replacing the top three floors. The BLM will be responsible for oversight and project management of the on-site work and for securing the necessary approvals from state engineers, SHPO, and tribal consultations.

Discussion followed regarding how contracts for construction have been handled by PBLSA in the past to keep costs lower. Ryan explained that the BLM engineers are concerned that if there are issues with contracted work, a federal agency will be better able to ensure the contractors complete the work as agreed. There was further discussion on the funding for the

construction phase of the project. Ryan hopes to fund the construction through Great America Outdoor Act funding rather than a capital campaign.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Jim asked if there had been any recent discussion with California State Parks regarding the access road, as the project has been in process for three years. Ryan said maybe that could be considered again soon.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. The SLO Community Foundation requested a final report for the 2019 BUILD grant they awarded for preparation for a capital campaign. Cressant discovered that not all the grant funds were spent and will contact the SLO CF to see how that should be handled.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – David said that there was no report other than to note that recent large donations have been targeted for this project.
10. Fresnel Lens Update (Scot Addis) – See Appendix 8. Scot said David's presentation about the PBLSA's accomplishments and projects at the November Lions Club meeting was well-received. The Pinedorado Lions Foundation is waiting on an insurance quote for the Fresnel lens in order to move forward with the loan agreement between the Foundation and the Coast Guard. All other points of concern have been addressed with the Coast Guard. Work on the lens enclosure is waiting on the evaluation from Shoreline Engineering and cost estimates from Wellsona Iron. David reported that the Shoreline report has been completed and that Dan is recalculating cost estimates based on the inclusion of new materials. Once the estimate is received, the community stakeholders can begin discussion on funding for the construction work. Jim asked if the PBLSA could contribute toward the insurance costs. David reminded the board that the PBLSA has committed to an estimated \$6,000 for the engineering work on the enclosure. The Pinedorado Lions Foundation could approach the PBLSA for assistance if necessary.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Boundary Fence Update (Gary O'Neill) – Gary reported that there is no update on the boundary fence. He asked if the BLM archaeologist could also consider the fence project when visiting for the parking lot project. Ryan reported that the agreement with local tribes in the original BLM management plan has expired; the archaeologist is working on renewing this agreement before beginning any construction projects with possible archaeological considerations in order to maintain a good relationship with local tribes.

There was further discussion on methods of removing the old fence and the procedure for possible tribal involvement in the project.

#### **New Business:**

None.

**Discussion Items:**

None.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on January 24, 2023.

## **Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 12/7/22 – Cressant Swarts**

### **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

October 26, 2022

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

**Absent:** John Brass

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

David thanked Gary and Sharon for their work on nominating new board member Veronika Kocen. Welcome to Veronika.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

#### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the September 28, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. September had a small loss in the operations budget, but the year to date is still showing a profit. An anonymous \$50,000 donation was received in September. It has been deposited to the operations budget. Another \$51,000 donation was received in October and deposited. Both were targeted donations for the Victorian cottage restoration plans. Harry asked the board for suggestions on how best to invest these donations, as the investment market has been volatile. Harry will convene the financial subcommittee to discuss investing the donations once he has received suggestions.

The BLM co-op agreement has ended, and the remaining funds refunded to BLM. The SF 425 report has been submitted, and Harry is working on the performance review, which is due at the end of the year. There has been no information yet on a new co-op agreement.

3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. The gift shop sales continue to increase by month over the same month in the previous year. The Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 1 raised a total of \$7,637.37 after expenses. The two previous events with Harmony Cellars raised approximately \$5,000 each.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Ryan suggested board members look at the sextant display created by Armando, a new volunteer who has been working in the wood shop. The display is in the museum room in the gift shop; interpretive materials will be coming soon.

Bre Brown, the new park ranger, will be starting the week of November 7. She last worked at Rocky Mountain National Park as a ranger; she will be helping with tours, trail work, facility maintenance, and perhaps other duties as time goes on. She will not be a law enforcement ranger.

The parking lot has had plants removed around the edges. Ryan is hoping for the BLM contracting officer to give him notice to proceed soon, so the contractor can begin. During work on the parking lot, visitors will have to park on State Park property and walk in for tours. The materials for the fog signal building lighting have arrived; the electrician will be able to start work in the second week of November. Tours will have to be modified slightly during this work.

Ryan received an informal approval by the district engineer of the three proposals relating to the tower stabilization. He will speak with the state engineer this week and continue working with the archaeologist to get the proposals approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. He is trying to combine SHPO approvals for the tower and the fence, to expedite both projects. The 15-year agreement reached with local Native American groups when BLM created the management plan for the light station has expired; the archaeologist has sent a letter to open discussions for a new agreement. It is hoped that these discussions will also lead to better interpretation of the Native American history of the light station.

Harry suggested that a formal agreement from BLM engineers be received before the board proceeds with fundraising plans; an agreement like this was received before work proceeded on the fog signal building. Ryan will discuss this with the state engineer this week.

The Golden Hour photo tour will take place on November 5; the goal is to plan more special tours and events after the new year. More volunteers are needed for school groups; it has been necessary to make school groups smaller. There will be a holiday party and volunteer recognition on Saturday, December 10.

Total tour numbers for FY 2022 are comparable to 2019, before the pandemic restrictions.

It was suggested that February 15, 2023, the light station's 148<sup>th</sup> birthday, would be a good date for a community celebration of the completion of the fog signal building. David suggested that interested board members contribute to the organization of the event.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim reiterated that the need for a timeline on the tower proposal approval is not a criticism of local BLM management; however, he suggested that the board ask for a schedule from BLM so that the PBLSA can begin planning for funding. After work on the lens enclosure is completed, Bruce and Dan will be available to work on plans for the reconstruction of the tower top. Jim proposed the following motion:

MOTION: Given that it has been nine months since the Shoreline proposal of 19 January 2022 was submitted to the BLM for review, the PBLSA Board request that the BLM provide an estimated schedule for the completion of their review so the PBLSA can initiate its planning and funding for the completion of the three tasks in the proposal.

Harry seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Jim summarized the history of the Shoreline report and proposals for the newer board members. Jim will send Veronika and Scot a copy of the proposals to review. David will send a copy of the Shoreline report. There was a suggestion to postpone the vote until Veronika was able to review the proposals. In light of the upcoming holidays, the board decided not to delay the vote on the motion.

The motion passed with one abstention (Veronika, pending her review of the proposals in question).

Jim will draft a letter to be addressed to Gabe Garcia, BLM Field Manager. He will circulate the letter to the board members and Ryan for feedback.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Jim observed that the time passing since Connected Energy drafted their white paper will require that the proposal be modified for increasing costs.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim suggested that the board begin planning for a capital campaign as soon as possible after approval of the tower proposals by BLM; preferably around the first of next year.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report. David would like to discuss the donations targeted to this project with Harry and Ryan outside of the meeting.
10. Fresnel Lens Update (Scot Addis) – See Appendix 8. Scot reported that the Pinedorado Lions Foundation submitted an alternative to the Coast Guard's standard loan agreement and storage requirements for the lens. The Coast Guard has agreed to prepare an addendum to each item of the original documents that will address the Foundation's concerns; these addenda are expected to be received by the end of October. The Coast Guard also approved continuing the engineering work to repair the lens enclosure as a short-term solution.

David has notified Bruce that he can proceed with the engineering work on the enclosure.

The Pinedorado Lions Foundation will act as fiduciary for the lens during this short-term phase; preliminary quotes for insurance are estimated at \$1,350 per year. The property on which the lens sits is owned by the county and is on a long-term lease to the Lions.

Scot has also updated the Cambria Tourism Board of the progress on the lens and followed up on the possibility of the Tourism Board funding part of the cost of the enclosure work.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Boundary Fence Update (Gary O'Neill) – Due to the additional complications introduced by digging holes for the fence, other less-invasive methods are being considered. Gary is asking the contractor who gave the previous bid about the possibility of adding an a-frame structure to each post as support. Another possibility is embedding steel spikes with platforms to hold 4x4 posts. He is hoping to get the contractor who gave the previous bid back on site to discuss ideas. Ryan is also doing some research and plans to test some ideas.

There was discussion on having a volunteer crew dig the holes for the fence with supervision from archaeological and tribal staff, then using concrete forms (sealed at the top to prevent animal entrapment) to hold the holes open. If nothing of archaeological significance is found during the digging, then the contractor can proceed with the fence installation. Gary will check into the cost of the concrete forms.

**New Business:** None.

**Discussion Items:** The date of the next board meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, December 7, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) on December 6, 2022.



## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 12/7/22 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for October 2022

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$9,772.60\* YTD: \$75,738.14\*\*  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: \$3,365.65\*\*\* YTD: \$9,684.53\*\*\*\*

**MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:** \$22,367.67\*\*  
**TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:** \$13,660.03

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: none YTD: \$1,748.98  
**BALANCES:** P.P. Bank: \$500.00 ASAP: none

\* Excludes \$51,000 donation  
\*\* Excludes \$101,000 donations  
\*\*\* Excludes \$7,383.44 restoration expense  
\*\*\*\* Excludes \$20,058.24 restoration expense

### 2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

Month	Beg Bal	Market Chg	Div/Int	Deposit	W/D	Ending Bal
Oct 2022	571,451.55	26,583.16	1,365.61	--	--	600,400.32
Sept 2022	635,693.89	<39,434.02>	1,091.68	--	<26,000>	571,451.55
Aug 2022	653,204.17	<18,595.29>	1,085.01	--	--	635,693.89

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for September/October. Made adjustments.
- FSB lighting materials were delivered. Paid balance of \$7,783.44 to Acropolis Lighting.
- Received donation of \$51,000 from anonymous donor. Sent tax exempt letter to donor.
- Renewed PBLSA account within SAM (annual renewal).
- Filed and paid 4<sup>th</sup> quarter sales tax.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
*Treasurer*

### Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 12/7/22 – Cressant Swarts

Sold tickets through Square for the Golden Hour Photo Tour, saving the cost of a third-party seller.

#### October Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$5,136.34
Website sales	\$113.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,715.60*</b>

\*Includes \$465.76 in Golden Hour Photo Tour sales

#### October Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold**	\$3,312.55
Profit	\$2,403.05
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>42%</b>

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

#### November Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$3,813.70
Website sales	\$15.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,953.70*</b>

\*Includes \$125 in Golden Hour Photo Tour sales

#### November Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold**	\$2,379.57
Profit	\$1,574.13
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>40%</b>

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

### NET SALES COMPARISONS

Shaded month indicates lower sales than that same month last year. Figures include website as well as on-site gift shop sales starting in 2021. Excludes donations, memberships, and engraved bricks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2016	1,798	2,609	2,830	1,988	2,142	2,586	4,861	3,410	2,716	2,647	1,930	2,103
2017	2,196	1,461	2,678	3,909	2,864	3,350	4,666	3,701	2,218	3,022	2,793	3,491
2018	3,077	3,094	3,104	3,316	3,133	3,707	6,225	4,157	3,383	2,552	1,597	1,730
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	8,784	5,354	8,964	4,073	

Government shutdown affected Dec 2018 and COVID-19 affected 2020/2021 beginning on March 19, 2020.

### Yearly Net Sales Comparisons

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2016	\$13,953	\$31,620
2017	\$16,458	\$36,349
2018	\$19,431	\$39,075
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020	\$7,187	\$8,743
2021	\$16,959	\$48,376
2022	\$28,717	

## Appendix 4: BLM Update 10/26/22 – Ryan Cooper

### New Park Ranger

SHE's HERE!

### Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

### Parking Lot Redesign / Restrooms

The bids came in lower than expected so we made a modification to the contract to chip seal all asphalt on the property. I am guessing it will happen early 2023.

### FSB Lighting

The electrician is working on it this week. FSB will be off limits for tours until he is done. It should not be for long. Now we need to think about a grand opening.

### Tower

We did hear from the Engineer and now I am working with the Archeologist to work through the SHPO and Tribal Consultation. David, Jim, and I met to discuss the project and we concluded an MOA should be developed to lay the project out with who is responsible for what and to set up some timelines.

### Special Event:

Monarch Grove

Holiday Party

Dec 2 and Dec 9, Dec 16

Dec 10 (Postponed)

### Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
October	506	441	535	22	552	421		
November	523	433	334	56	350	439		
December	829	251	518	0	208	50*		
January	608	0	715	0	300			
February	780	318	578	108	407			
March	662	784	185	160	471			
April	684	790	0	399	524			
May	362	555	0	446	452			
June	732	698	0	643	661			
July	1169	1085	0	972	881			
August	1001	819	0	834	1043			
September	591	374	0	547	487			
Total	8447	6548	2865	4166	6336			

## **Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 12/7/22 – Jim Harris**

In response to the action of the Board at the last meeting, a letter from the PBLSA was sent to Gabe Garcia of the BLM Bakersfield Office requesting a schedule for the completion of the BLM review of the three tasks identified in the Shoreline proposal (Job #404-05c) dated 19 January 2022. In response, a Zoom meeting was held on Monday, December 5, 2022, with David Cooper, Ryan Cooper, and Jim Harris to discuss the status of the BLM review. After discussion the plan is for the PBLSA and the BLM to promulgate a memorandum of understanding regarding the work for the restoration of the tower. The MOU will delineate the completion of the engineering work supported by the PBLSA and the initiation of the construction work that will be led by the BLM. David and Jim are preparing a draft of the MOU letter that will be sent to Ryan Cooper as the BLM person of contact, who will then forward it to the rest of the BLM for resolution. It is expected that the letter will be completed next week.

Work on the proposal for the tower top restoration by Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering and Dan Murphy of Wellsona is expected to continue next week after their work for the Lens enclosure in Cambria is completed. As stated before, after the completion and submittal of their tower top restoration proposal, along with the three tasks proposals and the Shoreline final report of October 14, 2021, under review by the BLM, there should be sufficient documented engineering work to begin the construction rehabilitation phase for restoring the tower.

## **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 12/7/22 – Jim Harris**

The status of this project remains the same as last time: the under-grounding 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. 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 12/7/22 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe**

Cressant Swarts is responding to a request from the SLO Community Foundation for a final report of a 2019 grant related to preparing for a capital campaign; apparently the Covid-19 pandemic caused a problem in completing the requirements of the grant and Cressant discovered the situation. Hopefully the situation will be resolved before the end of this year.

## **Appendix 8: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 12/7/22 – Scot Addis**

The Coast Guard (CG) has provided an addendum to their original lens loan agreement that addresses most of the points of concern held by the Pinedorado Lions Foundation (Foundation). However, the CG continues to require the borrower of record to insure the lens. The Foundation has contacted an insurance broker identified by the CG that has issued policies to insure Fresnel lenses in the past. The Foundation has completed an application for the insurance and is awaiting a quote and summary of coverage. Upon receipt, the Foundation board will review and determine the next steps to complete the loan agreement with the CG.

Separately, Shoreline Engineering has completed the final engineering evaluation and is working with Wellsona Iron to develop cost estimates for the enclosure repair project. Once the cost estimates are in hand, the CG has asked for a stakeholder call to provide a status report and discuss planned action to move forward. Once repair work begins, the CG has also requested the stakeholder group receive bi-monthly project updates.